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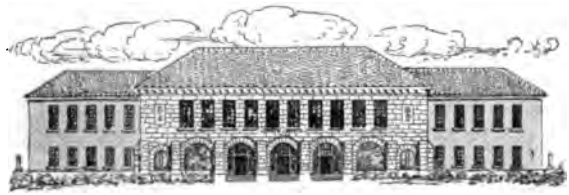

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STOVER AT YALE

"TOGETHER THEY WENT CHOKING THROUGH THE CROWD"—*Page 137*.

STOVER AT YALE

BY

OWEN JOHNSON

Author of "The Varmint," "The Tennessee Shad" etc.

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS IN BLACK AND WHITE BY

FREDERICK R. GRUGER

NEW YORK

FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY

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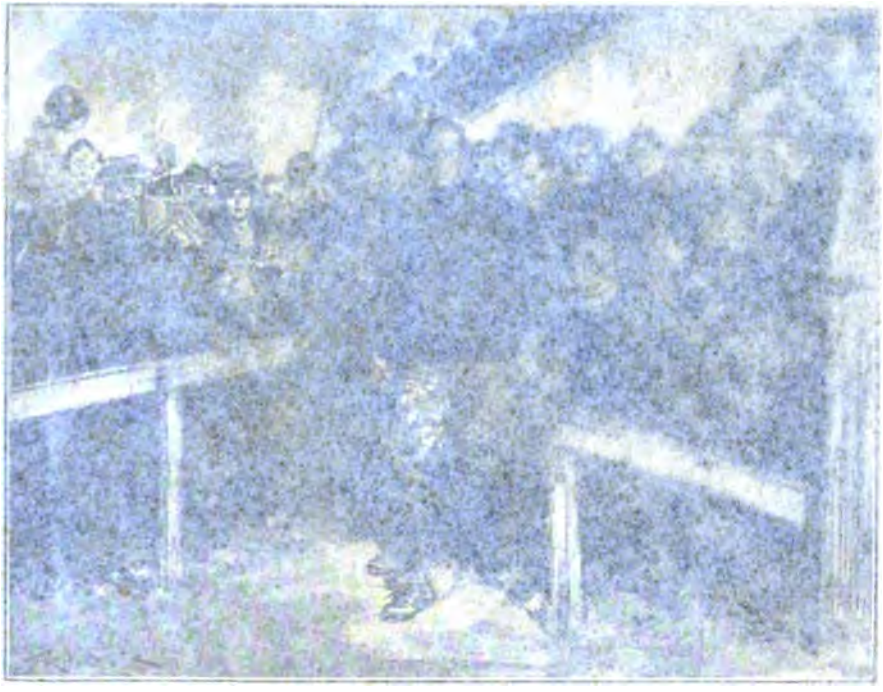

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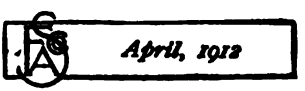

ILLUSTRATIONS

"Together they went choking through the crowd" . . . . . *Frontispiece*

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"'Hello,' said Rogers' quiet voice. 'Well, what do *you* want?'" 20

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STOVER AT YALE

STOVER AT YALE

CHAPTER I

DINK STOVER, freshman, chose his seat in the afternoon express that would soon be rushing him to New Haven and his first glimpse of Yale University. He leisurely divested himself of his trim overcoat, folding it in exact creases and laying it gingerly across the back of his seat; stowed his traveling-bag; smoothed his hair with a masked movement of his gloved hand; pulled down a buckskin vest, opening the lower button; removed his gloves and folded them in his breast pocket, while with the same gesture a careful forefinger, unperceived, assured itself that his lilac silk necktie was in snug contact with the high collar whose points, painfully but in perfect style, attacked his chin. Then, settling, not flopping, down, he completed his preparations for the journey by raising the sharp crease of the trousers one inch over each knee — a legendary precaution which in youth is believed to prevent vulgar bagging. Each movement was executed without haste or embarrassment, but leisurely, with the deliberate *savoir-faire* of the complete man of the world he had become at the terrific age of eighteen.

In front of him spasmodic freshmen arrived, struggling from their overcoats in embarrassed plunges that threatened to leave them publicly in their shirt sleeves.

That they imputed to him the superior dignity of an upper classman was pleasurably evident to Stover from their covert respectful glances. He himself felt conscious of a dividing-line. He, too, was a freshman, and yet not of them.

He had just ended three years at Lawrenceville, where from a ridiculous beginning he had fought his way to the captaincy of the football eleven and the vice-presidency of the school. He had been the big man in a big school, and the sovereign responsibilities of that anointed position had been, of course, such that he no longer felt himself a free agent. He had been of the chosen, and not all at once could he divest himself of the idea that his slightest action had a certain public importance. His walk had been studiously imitated by twenty shuffling striplings. His hair, parted on the side, had caused a revolution among the brushes and stirred up innumerable indignant cowlicks. His tricks of speech, his favorite exclamations, had become at once lip-currency. At that time golf and golf-trousers were things of unthinkable daring. He had given his approval, appeared in the baggy breeches, and at once the ban on bloomers had been lifted and the Circle had swarmed with the grotesqueries of variegated legs for the first time boldly revealed. He had stood between the school and its tyrants. He had arrayed himself in circumstantial attire — boiled shirt, high collar, and carefully dusted derby — and appeared before the faculty with solemn, responsible face no less than three separate times, to voice the protest of four hundred future American citizens: first, at the insidious and alarming repetition of an abhorrent article of winter food known as scrag-birds and sinkers; second, to urge the overwhelming necessity of a second sleighing holiday; and, third and most important, firmly to assure

the powers that be that the school viewed with indignation and would resist to despair the sudden increase of the already staggering burden of the curriculum.

The middle-aged faculty had listened gravely to the grave expounder of such grave demands, had promised reform and regulation in the matter of the sinkers, granted the holiday, and insufficiently modified the brutal attempt at injecting into the uneager youthful mind a little more of the inconsequential customs of the Greeks and Romans.

The Doctor had honored him with his confidence, consulted him on several intimate matters of school discipline — in fact, most undoubtedly had rather leaned upon him. As he looked back upon the last year at Lawrenceville, he could not help feeling a certain wholesome, pleasant satisfaction. He had held up an honest standard, he had played hard but square, disdained petty offenses, seen to the rigorous bringing up of the younger boys, and, as men of property must lend their support to the church, he had even publicly advised a moderate attention to the long classic route which leads to college. He had been the big man in the big school; what new opportunity lay before him?

In the seat ahead two of his class were exchanging delighted conjectures, and their conversation, coming to his ears clearly through the entangled murmur of the car, began to interest him.

"I say, Schley, you were Hotchkiss, weren't you?"

"Eight mortal years."

"Got a good crowd?"

"No wonder-workers, but a couple of good men for the line. What's your Andover crowd like?"

"We had a daisy bunch, but some of the pearls have been side-tracked to Princeton and Harvard."

"Bought up, eh?"

"Sure," said the speaker, with the profoundest conviction.

"Big chance, McNab, for the eleven this year," said Schley, in a thin, anemic, authoritative sort of way. "Play football yourself?"

"Sure — if any one will kick me," said McNab, who in fact had a sort of roly-poly resemblance to the necessary pigskin. "Lord, I'm no strength-breaker. I'm a funny man, side-splitting joker, regular cut-up — didos and all that sort of thing. What are you out for?"

"A good time first, last, and always."

"Am I? Just ask me!" said McNab explosively; and in a justly aggrieved tone he added: "Lord, haven't I slaved like a mule ten years to get there! I don't know how long it'll last, but while it does it will be a lulu!"

"My old dad gave me a moral lecture."

"Sure. Opportunity — character — beauty of the classics — hope to be proud of my son — you're a man now —"

"That's it."

"Sure thing. Lord, we'll be doing the same twenty-five years from now," said McNab, who thus logically and to his own satisfaction disposed of this fallacy. He added generously, however, with a wave of his hand: "A father ought to talk that way — the right thing — wouldn't care a flip of a mule's tail for my dad if he didn't. And say, by gravy, he sort of got me, too — damned impressive!"

"Really?"

"Honor bright." A flicker of reminiscent convictions passed over McNab's frolicking face. "Yes, and I made a lot of resolutions, too — good resolutions."

"Come off!"

"Well, that was day before yesterday."

The train started with a sudden crunching. A curious, excited thrill possessed Stover. He had embarked, and the quick plunge into the darkness of the long tunnel had, to his keenly sentimental imagination, something of the dark transition from one world into another. Behind was the known and the accomplished; ahead the coming of man's estate and man's freedom. He was his own master at last, free to go and to come, free to venture and to experience, free to know that strange, guarded mystery — life — and free, knowing it, to choose from among it many ways.

And yet, he felt no lack of preparation. Looking back, he could honestly say to himself that where a year ago he had seen darkly now all was clear. He had found himself. He had gambled. He had consumed surreptitiously at midnight a sufficient quantity of sickening beer. He had consorted with men of uncontrollable passions and gone his steady path. He had loved, hopelessly, madly, with all the intensity and honesty of which he was capable, a woman — a slightly older woman — who had played with the fragile wings of his boy's illusion and left them wounded; he had fought down that weakness and learned to look on a soft cheek and challenging eye with the calm, amused control of a man, who invincibly henceforth would cast his life among men. There was not much knowledge of life, if any, that could come to him. He did not proclaim it, but quietly, as a great conviction, heritage of sorrow and smashing disillusionments, he knew it was so. He knew it all — he was a man; and this would give him an advantage among his younger fellows in the free struggle for leadership that was now opening to his joyful combative nature.

"It'll be a good fight, and I'll win," he said to himself,

and his crossed arms tightened with a quick, savage contraction, as if the idea were something that could be pursued, tackled, and thrown headlong to the ground.

"There's a couple of fellows from Lawrenceville coming up," said a voice from a seat behind him. "McCarthy and Stover, they say, are quite wonders."

"I've heard of Stover; end, wasn't he?"

"Yes; and the team's going to need ends badly."

It was the first time he had heard his name published abroad. He sat erect, drawing up one knee and locking his hands over it in a strained clasp. Suddenly the swimming vista of the smoky cars disappeared, rolling up into the tense, crowded, banked arena, with white splotches of human faces, climbing like daisy fields that moved restlessly, nervously stirred by the same expectant tensity with which he stood on the open field waiting for his chance to come.

"I like a fight — a good fight," he said to himself, drawing in his breath; and the wish seemed but a simple one, the call for the joyful shock of bodies in fair combat. And life was nothing else — a battle in the open where courage and a thinking mind must win.

"I'll bet we get a lot of fruits," said Schley's rather calculating voice.

"Oh, some of them aren't half bad."

"Think so?"

"I say, what do you know about this society game?"

"Look out."

"What's matter?"

"You chump, you never know who's around you." As he spoke, Schley sent an uneasy glance back toward Stover, and, dropping his voice, continued: "You don't talk about such things."

"Well, I'm not shouting it out," said McNab, who

looked at his more sophisticated companion with a little growing antagonism. "What are you scared about?"

"It's the class ahead of you that counts," said Schley hurriedly, "the sophomore and senior societies; the junior fraternities don't count; if you're in a sophomore you always go into them."

"Never heard of the sophomore societies," said McNab, in a maliciously higher tone. "Elucidate somewhat."

"There are three: Hé Boulé, Eta Phi, and Kappa Psi," said Schley, with another uneasy, squirming glance back at Stover. "They're secret as the deuce; seventeen men in each — make one and you're in line for a senior."

"How the deuce did you get on to all this?"

"Oh, I've been coached up."

Something in the nascent sophistication of Schley displeased Stover. He ceased to listen, occupying himself with an interested examination of the figures who passed from time to time in the aisle, in search of returning friends. The type was clearly defined; alert, clean-cut, self-confident, dressed on certain general divisions, affecting the same style of correct hat and collar, with, as distinguishing features, a certain boyish exuberance and a distinct nervous energy.

At this moment an abrupt resonant voice said at his side:

"Got a bit of room left beside you?"

Stover shifted his coat, saying:

"Certainly; come on in."

He saw a man of twenty-two or -three, with the head and shoulders of a bison, sandy hair, with a clear, blue, steady glance, heavy hands, and a face already set in the mold of stern purpose. He stood a moment, holding

a decrepit handbag stuffed to the danger point, hesitating whether to stow it in the rack above, and then said:

"Guess I won't risk it. That's my trunk. I'll tuck it in here." He settled in the vacant seat, saying: "What are you — an upper classman?"

Something like a spasm passed over the well-ironed shoulders of Schley in front.

"No, I'm not," said Stover, and, extending his hand, he said: "I guess we're classmates. My name's Stover."

"My name's Regan — Tom Regan. Glad to know you. I'm sorry you're not an upper classman, though."

"Why so?" said Stover.

"I wanted to get a few pointers," said Regan, in a matter-of-fact way. "I'm working my way through and I want to know the ropes."

"I wish I knew," said Stover, with instinctive liking for the blunt elemental force beside him. "What are you going to try?"

"Anything — waiting, to start in with." He gave him a quick glance. "That's not your trouble, is it?"

"No."

"It's a glorious feeling, to be going up, I tell you," said Regan, with a sudden lighting up of his rugged features. "Can hardly believe it. I've been up against those infernal examinations six times, and I'd have gone up against them six more but I'd down them."

"Where did you come from?"

"Pretty much everywhere. Des Moines, Iowa, at the last."

"It's a pretty fine college," said Stover, with a new thrill.

"It's a college where you stand on your own feet, all square to the wind," said Regan, with conviction.

"That's what got me. It's worth everything to get here."

"You're right."

"I wonder if I could get hold of some upper classman," said Regan uneasily.

That this natural desire should be the most unnatural in the world was already clear to Stover; only, somehow, he did not like to look into Regan's eyes and make him understand.

"How are you, Stover? Glad to see you."

Dink, looking up, beheld the erect figure and well-mannered carriage of Le Baron, a sophomore, already a leader of his class, whom he had met during the summer. In the clean-cut features and naturally modulated voice there was a certain finely aristocratic quality that won rather than provoked.

Stover was on his feet at once, a little embarrassed despite himself, answering hurriedly the questions addressed to him.

"Get your room over in York Street? Good. You're in a good crowd. You look a little heavier. In good shape? Your class will have to help us out on the eleven this year."

Stover introduced Regan. Le Baron at once was sympathetic, gave many hints, recommended certain people to see, and smilingly offered his services.

"Come around any time; I'll put you in touch with several men that will be of use to you. Get out for the team right off — that'll make you friends." Then, turning to Stover, he added, with just a shade of difference in his tone: "I was looking for you particularly. I want you to dine with me to-night. I'll be around about seven. Awfully glad you're here. At seven."

He passed on, giving his hand to the right and left.

Stover felt as if he had received the accolade. Schley ahead was squirmingly impressed; one or two heads across the aisle turned in his direction, wondering who could be the freshman whom Le Baron so particularly took under his protection.

"Isn't he a king?" he said enthusiastically to Regan, with just a pardonable pleasure in his exuberance. "He made the crew last year — probably be captain; sub-tackle on the eleven. I played against him two years ago when he was at Andover. Isn't he a king, though!"

"I don't know," said Regan, with a drawing of his lips.

Stover was astounded.

"Why not?"

"Don't know."

"What's wrong?"

"Hard to tell. He sizes up for a man all right, but I don't think we'd agree on some things."

The incident momentarily halted the conversation. Stover was a little irritated at what seemed to him his companion's over-sensitiveness. Le Baron had been more than kind in his proffer of help. He was at a loss to understand why Regan should not see him through his eyes.

"You think I'm finicky," said Regan, breaking the silence.

"Yes, I do," said Stover frankly.

"I guess you and I'll understand each other," said Regan, approving of his directness. "Perhaps I am wrong. But, boy, this place means a great deal to me, and the men that are in it and lead it."

"It's the one place where money makes no difference," said Stover, with a flash — "where you stand for what you are."

Regan turned to him.

"I've fought to get here, and I'll have a fight to stay. It means something to me."

The train began to slacken in the New Haven station. They swarmed out on to the platform amid the returning gleeful crowd, crossing and intercrossing, caught up in the hubbub of shouted recognition.

"Hello, Stuffy!"

"There's Stuffy Davis!"

"Hello, boys."

"Oh, Jim Thompson, have we your eye?"

"Come on."

"Get the crowd together."

"All into a hack."

"Back again, Bill!"

"Join you later. I've got a freshman."

"Where you rooming?"

"See you at Mory's."

Buffeted by the crowd they made their way across the depot to the street.

"I'm going to hoof it," said Regan, extending his hand. "Glad to have met you. I'll drop in on you soon."

Stover watched him go stalwartly through the crowd, his bag under one arm, his soft hat set a little at defiance, looking neither to the right nor left.

"Why the deuce did he say that about Le Baron?" he thought, with a feeling of irritation.

Then, obeying an impulse, he signaled an expressman, consigned his bag, and made his way on foot, dodging in and out of the rapidly filled hacks, where upper classmen sat four on the seat, hugging one another with bearlike hugs.

"Eh, freshman, take off that hat!"

He removed his derby immediately, bowing to a hilarious crowd, who rocked ahead shouting back unintelligible gibes at him.

Others were clinging to car steps and straps.

"Hello, Dink!"

Some one had called him but he could not discover who. He swung down the crowded street to the heart of the city in the rapid dropping of the twilight. There was a dampness underfoot that sent to him long, wavering reflections from early street-lamps. The jumble of the city was in his ears, the hazy, crowded panorama in his eyes, at his side the passing contact of strangers. Everything was multiplied, complex, submerging his individuality.

But this feeling of multitude did not depress him. He had come to conquer, and zest was in his step and alertness in his glance. Out of the churning of the crowd he passed into the clear sweep of the city Common, and, looking up through the mist, for the first time beheld the battlements of the college awaiting him ahead, lost in the hazy elms.

Across the quiet reaches of the Common he went slowly, incredibly, toward these strange shapes in brick and stone. The evening mist had settled. They were things undefined and mysterious, things as real as the things of his dreams. He passed on through the portals of Phelps Hall, hearing above his head for the first time the echoes of his own footsteps against the resounding vault.

Behind him remained the city, suddenly hushed. He was on the campus, the Brick Row at his left; in the distance the crowded line of the fence, the fence where he later should sit in joyful conclave. Somewhere there in the great protecting embrace of these walls were the

friends that should be his, that should pass with him through those wonderful years of happiness and good fellowship that were coming.

"And this is it — this is Yale," he said reverently, with a little tightening of the breath.

They had begun at last — the happy, care-free years that every one proclaimed. Four glorious years, good times, good fellows, and a free and open fight to be among the leaders and leave a name on the roll of fame. Only four years, and then the world with its perplexities and grinding trials.

"Four years," he said softly. "The best, the happiest I'll ever know! Nothing will ever be like them — nothing!"

And, carried away with the confident joy of it, he went toward his house, shoulders squared, with the step of a d'Artagnan and a song sounding in his ears.

CHAPTER II

HE found the house in York Street, a low, white-washed frame building, luminous under the black canopy of the overtowering elms. At the door there was a little resistance and a guarded voice cried:

"What do you want?"

"I want to get in."

"What for?"

"Because I want to."

"Very sorry," said McNab's rather squeaky voice — "most particular sorry; but this house is infected with yellow fever and the rickets, and we wouldn't for the world share it with the sophomore class — oh, no!"

A light began to dawn over Stover.

"I'm rooming here," he said.

"What's your name and general style of beauty?"

"Stover, and I've got a twitching foot."

"Why didn't you say so?" said McNab, who then admitted him. "Pardon me. The sophomores are getting so fidgety, you know, hopping all up and down. My name's McNab — German extraction. Came up on the train, ahead of you — thought you were a sophomore, you put on such a beautiful side. Here, put on that chain."

"Hazing?"

"Oh, no, indeed. Just a few members of the weakling class above us might get too fond of us; just must

see us — welcome to Yale and all that sort of thing. I hate sentimental exhibitions, don't you?"

"Is McCarthy here?" said Stover, laughing.

"Your wife is waiting for you most anxiously."

"Hello, is that Dink?" called down McCarthy's exuberant voice at this moment.

Stover went up the stairs like a terrier, answering the joyful whoop with a war-cry of his own. The next moment he and McCarthy were pummeling each other, wrestling about the room, to the dire danger of furniture and crockery. When this sentimental moment had exhausted itself physically, McCarthy bore him to the back of the house, saying:

"We don't want to show our light in front just yet. We've got a corking lot in the house — best of the Andover crowd. Come on; I'll introduce you. You remember Hunter, who played against me at tackle? He's here."

There were half a dozen loitering on the window-seat and beds in the pipe-ridden room.

Hunter, in shirt sleeves, sorting the contents of his trunk, came forward at once.

"Hello, Stover, how are you?"

"How are you?"

No sooner did their hands clasp than a change came to Dink. He was face to face with the big man of the Andover crowd, measuring him and being measured. The sudden burst of boyish affection that had sent him into McCarthy's arms was gone. This man could not help but be a leader in the class. He was older than the rest, but how much it would have been hard to say. He examined, analyzed, and deliberated. He knew what lay before him. He would make no mistakes. He was car-

ried away by no sentimental enthusiasm. Everything about him was reserved — his cordiality, the quiet grip of his hand, the smile of welcome, and the undecipherable estimate in his eyes.

"Will you follow me or shall I follow you?" each seemed to say in the first contact, which was a challenge.

"How are you?" said Stover, shaking hands with some one else; and the tone was the tone of Hunter.

There were three others in the room: Hunter's roommate, Stone, a smiling, tall, good-looking fellow who shook his hand an extra period; Saunders, silent, retired behind his spectacles; and Logan, who roomed with McNab, who sunk his shoulders as he shook hands and looked into Stover's eyes intensely as he said, "Awful glad; awful glad to know you."

"Have a pipe — cigarette — anything?" said Hunter over his shoulder, from the trunk to which he had returned.

"No, thanks."

"Started training?"

"Sort of."

"Take a chair and make yourself at home," said Hunter warmly, but without turning.

The talk was immediately of what each was going to do. Stone was out for the glee club, already planning to take singing lessons in the contest for the leadership, three years off. Saunders was to start for the *News*. Logan had made drawings during the summer and was out for the *Record*. Hunter was trying for his class team and the crew. Only McNab was defiant.

"None of that for me," he said, on his back, legs in the air, blowing rings against the ceiling. "I'm for a good time, the best in life. It may be a short one, but it'll be a lulu!"

"You'll be out heeling the *Record,* Dopey, inside of a month," said Hunter quietly.

"Never, by the Great Horned Spoon — never!"

"And you'll get a tutor, Dopey, and stay with us."

"Never! I came to love and to be loved. I'm a lovely thing; that's sufficient," said McNab, with a grimace to his elfish face. "I will not be harnessed up. I will not heel."

"Yes, you will."

Hunter's tone had not varied. Stover, studying him, wondered if he had marked out the route of Stone, Saunders, and Logan, just as he felt that McNab would sooner or later conform to the will of the man who had determined to succeed himself and make his own crowd succeed.

Reynolds, a sophomore, an old Andover man, dropped in. Again it was but question of the same challenge, addressed to each:

"What are you trying for?"

The arrival of the sophomore, who installed himself in easy majesty in the arm-chair and addressed his questions with a quick, analytical staccato, produced somewhat the effect of a suddenly opened window. Even McNab was unwillingly impressed, and Hunter, closing the trunk, allowed the conversation to be guided by Reynolds' initiative.

He was a fiery, alert, rather undersized fellow, who had been the first in his class to make the *News,* and was supposed to be in line for that all-important chairmanship.

Inside of five minutes he had gone through the possibilities of each man, advising briefly in a quick, businesslike manner. To Stover he seemed symbolic of the rarefied contending nervousness of the place, a person-

ality that suddenly threw open to him all the nervous panorama of the struggle for position which had already begun.

On top of which there arrived Rogers, a junior, good-natured, popular, important. At once, to Stover's amused surprise, the rôle was reversed. Reynolds, from the enthroned autocrat, became the respectful audience, answered a few questions, and found a quick opportunity to leave.

"Let's go in front and have a little fun," said Rogers.

Somewhat perplexed, Stover led the way to their room.

"Light up," said Rogers, with a chuckle. "There's a sophomore bunch outside just ready to tumble."

Rogers' presence brought back a certain ease; they were no longer on inspection, and even in his manner was a more open cordiality than he had showed toward Reynolds. That under all this was some graduated system of authority Stover was slowly perceiving, when all at once from the street there rose a shout:

"Turn down that light!"

"Freshmen, turn down that light!"

"Turn it down slowly," said Rogers, with a gesture to McNab.

"Faster!"

"All the way down!"

"Turn it up suddenly," said Rogers.

An angry swelling protest arose:

"Turn that down!"

"You freshmen!"

"Turn it down!"

"The freshest of the fresh!"

"Here, let me work 'em up," said Rogers, going to the gas-jet.

Under his tantalizing manipulation the noise outside grew to the proportions of a riot.

"Come on and get the bloody freshmen!"

"Ride 'em on a rail!"

"Say, are we going to stand for this?"

"Down with that light!"

"Let's run 'em out!"

"Break in the door!"

"Out with the freshman!"

Below came a sudden rush of feet. Rogers, abandoning the gas-jet, draped himself nonchalantly on the couch that faced the door.

"Well, here comes the shindy," thought Stover, with a joyful tensity in every muscle.

The hubbub stormed up the hall, shot open the door, and choked the passage with the suddenly revealed fury of angry faces.

"Hello," said Rogers' quiet voice. "Well, what do *you* want?"

No sooner had the barbaric front ranks beheld the languid, slightly annoyed junior than the fury of battle vanished like a flurry of wind across the water. From behind the more concealed began to murmur:

"Oh, beans!"

"A lemon!"

"Rubber!"

"Sold!"

"Well, what is it?" said Rogers sharply, sending a terrific frown at the sheepish leaders.

At this curt reminder there was a shifting movement in the rear, which rapidly communicated itself to the stammering, apologetic front ranks; the door was closed in ludicrous haste, and down the stairs resounded the stampede of the baffled host.

"My, they are a fierce lot, these man-eating sophomores, aren't they?" said Rogers, giving way to his laughter. And then, a little apologetically, but with a certain twinkle of humor, he added: "Don't worry, boys; there was no one in that crowd who'll do you any harm. However, I might just as well chaperon you to your eating-joint."

"Le Baron is going to take me out with him," said Stover, as they rose to go.

"Hugh Le Baron?" said Rogers, with a new interest.

"Yes, sir."

"I didn't get your name."

"Stover."

"Oh! Captain down at Lawrenceville, weren't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, wish you good luck," said Rogers, with a more appraising eye. "You've got an opening this year. Drop in and see me sometime, will you? I mean it."

"See you later, Stover," said Hunter, resting his hand on his shoulder with a little friendly touch.

"Bully you're with us," said Stone.

"Come in and chin a little later," said Logan.

Saunders gave him a duck of the head, with unconcealed admiration in his embarrassed manner.

McCarthy went with them. Stover, left alone, measured the length of the room, smiling to himself. It was all quite amusing, especially when his was the fixed point of view.

In a few moments Le Baron arrived. Together they went across the campus, now swarming like ant runs. At every step Le Baron was halted by a greeting. Recognition was in the air, turbulent, boyish, exaggerated, rising to the pitch of a scream or accomplished in

"'HELLO,' SAID ROGERS' QUIET VOICE, 'WELL, WHAT DO YOU WANT?'—*Page 19.*

a bear dance; and through it all was the same vibrant, minor note of the ceaseless activity.

It was the air Stover loved. He waited respectfully, while Le Baron shook a score of hands, impatient for the moment to begin and the opportunity to have his name told from lip to lip.

"I'm going to be captain at Yale," he said to himself, with a sudden fantastic, grandiloquent fury. "I will if it's in me."

"We'll run down to Heub's," said Le Baron, free at last, "get a good last meal before going into training. You look in pretty fit shape."

"I've kept so all summer."

"Who's over in your house?"

Stover named them.

"They weren't my crowd at Andover, but they're good fellows," said Le Baron, listening critically. "Hunter especially. Here we are."

A minute later they had found a table in the restaurant crowded with upper classmen, and Le Baron was glancing down the menu.

"An oyster cocktail, a planked steak — rare; order the rest later." He turned to Stover. "Guess we'd better cut out the drinks. We'll stand the gaff better to-morrow."

There was in his voice a quiet possession, as if he had already assumed the reins of Stover's career.

"Are you out for the eleven again?" said Stover respectfully.

"Yes. I'll never do any better than a sub, but that's what counts. We're up against an awfully stiff proposition this year. The team's got to be built out of nothing. There's Dana, the captain, now, over at the table in the corner."

"Where?" said Stover, fired at the thought.

Le Baron pointed out the table, detailing to him the names of some of the coaches who were grouped there.

When Stover had dared to gaze for the first time on the face of the majestic leader, he experienced a certain shock. The group of past heroes about him were laughing, exchanging reminiscences of past combats; but the face of Dana was set in seriousness, too sensitive to the responsibility that lay heavier than the honor on his young shoulders. Stover had not thought of his leader so.

"I guess it's going to be a bad season," he said.

"Yes; we may have to take our medicine this year."

Several friends of Le Baron's stopped to shake hands, greeting Stover always with that appraising glance which had amused him in Reynolds who had first sat in inquisition.

He began to be conscious of an ever-widening gulf separating him and Le Baron, imposed by all the subtle, still uncomprehended incidents of the night, which gradually made him see that he had found, not a friend, but a protector. A certain natural impulsiveness left him; he answered in short sentences, resenting a little this sudden, not yet defined sense of subjection.

But the hum of diners was about him, the unknown intoxication of lights, the prevailing note of joy, the free concourse of men, the vibrant note of good fellowship, good cheer, and the eager seizing of the zest of the hour. The men he saw were the men who had succeeded — a success which unmistakably surrounded them. He, too, wished for success acutely, almost with a throbbing, gluttonous feeling, sitting there unknown.

All at once Dana, passing across the room, stopped for a handshake and a word of greeting to Le Baron.

Stover was introduced, rising precipitately, to the imminent danger of his plate.

"Stover from Lawrenceville?" said Dana.

"Yes, sir."

The captain's eye measured him carefully, taking in the wiry, spare frame, the heavy shoulders, and the nervous hands, and then stayed on the clean-cut jaw, the direct blue glance, and the rebellious rise of sandy hair.

"End, of course," he said at last.

"Yes, sir."

"About a hundred and fifty-four?"

"One hundred and fifty, sir, stripped."

"Ever played in the back field?"

"No, sir."

"Report with the varsity squad to-morrow."

"Yes, sir."

"There's a type of man we're proud of," said Le Baron. "Came here from Exeter, waited at Commons first two years; every one likes him. He has a tough proposition here this year, though — supposing we dig out."

In the room the laughter was rising, and all the little nervous noises of the clash of plate and cutlery. Stover would have liked to stay, to yield to the contagion, to watch with eager eyes the opposite types, all under the careless spell of the beginning year.

The city was black about them as they stepped forth, the giant elms flattened overhead against the blurred mists of the night, like curious water weeds seen from below.

They went in silence directly toward the campus. Once or twice Le Baron started to speak and then stopped. At length he said:

"Come this way."

They passed by Osborne Hall, and the Brick Row with the choked display of the Coöp below, and, crossing to the dark mass of the Old Library, sat down on the steps.

Before Stover stretched all the lighted panorama of the college and the multiplied strewn lights against the mysteries of stone and brick — lights that drew him to the quiet places of a hundred growing existencies — affected him like the lights of the crowded restaurant and the misty reflections of the glassy streets. It was the night, the mysterious night that suddenly had come into his boyish knowledge.

It was immense, unfathomable — this spectacle of a massed multitude. It was all confounded, stirring, ceaseless, feverish in its brilliant gaiety, fleeting, transitory, mocking. It was of the stage, theatric. It brought theatric emotions, too keenly sensitized, too sharply overwhelming. He wished to flee from it in despair of ever conquering, as he wished to conquer, this world of stirring ambitions and shadowy and fleeting years.

"I'm going to do for you," said Le Baron's voice, breaking the charm — "I'm going to do what some one did for me when I came here last year."

He paused a moment, a little, too, under the spell of the night, perhaps, seeking how best to choose his words.

"It is a queer place you're coming into, and many men fail for not understanding it in time. I'm going to tell you a few things."

Again he stopped. Stover, waiting, heard across from the blazing sides of Farnam a piano's thin, rushing notes. Nearer, from some window unseen, a mandolin was quavering. Voices, calling, mingled in softened confusion.

"Oh, Charley Bangs — stick out your head."

"We want Billy Brown."

"Hello, there!"

"Tubby, this way!"

Then this community of faint sounds was lost as, from the fence, a shapeless mass beyond began to send its song towards him.

"When freshmen first we came to Yale
Fol-de-rol-de-rol-rol-rol.
Examinations made us pale
Fol-de-rol-de-rol-rol-rol."

"What do you know about the society system here?" said Le Baron abruptly.

"Why, I know — there are three senior societies: Skull and Bones, Keys, Wolf's-Head — but I guess that's all I do know."

"You'll hear a good deal of talk inside the college, and out of it, too, about the system. It has its faults. But it's the best system there is, and it makes Yale what it is to-day. It makes fellows get out and work; it gives them ambitions, stops loafing and going to seed, and keeps a pretty good, clean, temperate atmosphere about the place."

"I know nothing at all about it," said Stover, perplexed.

"The seniors have fifteen in each; they give out their elections end of junior year, end of May. That's what we're all working for."

"Already?" said Stover involuntarily.

"There are fellows in your class," said Le Baron, "who've been working all summer, so as to get ahead in the competition for the *Lit* or the *Record*, or to make the leader of the glee club — fellows, of course, who know."

"But that's three years off."

"Yes, it's three years off," said Le Baron quietly. "Then there are the junior fraternities; but they're large, and at present don't count much, except you have to make them. Then there are what are called sophomore societies." He hesitated a moment. "They are very important."

"Do you belong?" asked Stover innocently.

"Yes," said Le Baron, after another hesitation. "Of course, we don't discuss our societies here. Others will tell you about them. But here's where your first test will come in."

Then came another lull. Stover, troubled, frowning, sat staring at the brilliant windows across which passed, from time to time, a sudden shadow. The groups at the fence were singing a football song, with a marching swing to it, that had so often caught up his loyal soul as he had sat shivering in the grand-stand for the game to begin. It was not all so simple — no, not at all simple. It wasn't as he had thought. It was complex, a little disturbing.

"This college is made up of all sorts of elements," said Le Baron, at last. "And it is not easy to run it. Now, in every class there are just a small number of fellows who are able to do it and who will do it. They form the real crowd. All the rest don't count. Now, Stover, you're going to have a chance at something big on the football side; but that is not all. You might make captain of the eleven and miss out on a senior election. You're going to be judged by your friends, and it is just as easy to know the right crowd as the wrong."

"What do you mean by the right crowd?" said Stover, conscious of just a little antagonism.

"The right crowd?" said Le Baron, a little perplexed

to define so simple a thing. "Why, the crowd that is doing things, working for Yale; the crowd —"

"That the class ahead picks out to lead us," said Stover abruptly.

"Yes," said Le Baron frankly; "and it won't be a bad judgment. Money alone won't land a man in it, and there'll be some in it who work their way through college. On the whole, it's about the crowd you'll want to know all through life."

"I see," said Stover. His clasp tightened over his knees, and he was conscious of a certain growing uncomfortable sensation. He liked Le Baron — he had looked up to him, in a way. Of course, it was all said in kindness, and yet —

"I'm frankly aristocratic in my point of view" — he heard the well-modulated voice continue — "and what I say others think. I'm older than most of my class, and I've seen a good deal of the world at home and abroad. You may think the world begins outside of college. It doesn't; it begins right here. You want to make the friends that will help you along, here and outside. Don't lose sight of your opportunities, and be careful how you choose.

"Now, by that I mean don't make your friends too quickly. Get to know the different crowds, but don't fasten to individuals until you see how things work out. This rather surprises you, doesn't it? Perhaps you don't like it."

"It does sort of surprise me," said Stover, who did not answer what he meant.

"Stover," said Le Baron, resting a hand on his knee, "I like you. I liked you from the first time we lined up in that Andover-Lawrenceville game. You've got the stuff in you to make the sort of leader we need at Yale.

That's why I'm trying to make you see this thing as it is. You come from a school that doesn't send many fellows here. You haven't the fellows ahead pulling for you, the way the other crowds have. I don't want you to make any mistake. Remember, you're going to be watched from now on."

"Watched?" said Stover, frowning.

"Yes; everything you do, everything you say — that's how you'll be judged. That's why I'm telling you these things."

"I appreciate it," said Stover, but without enthusiasm.

"Now, you've got a chance to make good on the eleven this year. If you do, you stand in line for the captaincy senior year. It lies with you to be one of the big men in the class. And this is the way to do it: get to know every one in the class right off."

"What!" said Stover, genuinely surprised.

"I mean, bow to every one; call them by name: but hold yourself apart," said Le Baron. "Make fellows come to you. Don't talk too much. Hold yourself in. Keep out of the crowd that is out booze-fighting — or, when you're with them, keep your head. There are a lot of fellows here, with friends ahead of them, who can cut loose a certain amount; but it's dangerous. If you want to make what you ought to make of yourself, Stover, you've got to prove yourself; you've got to keep yourself well in hand."

Stover suddenly comprehended that Le Baron was exposing his own theory, that he, prospective captain of the crew, was imposing on himself.

"Don't ticket yourself for drinking."

"I won't."

"Or get known for gambling — oh, I'm not preaching a moral lesson; only, what you do, do quietly."

"I understand."

"And another thing: no fooling around women; that isn't done here — that'll queer you absolutely."

"Of course."

"Now, you've got to do a certain amount of studying here. Better do it the first year and get in with the faculty."

"I will."

"There it is," said Le Baron, suddenly extending his hand toward the lighted college. "Isn't it worth working for — to win out in the end? And, Stover, it's easy enough when you know how. Play the game as others are playing it. It's a big game, and it'll follow you all through life. There it is; it's up to you. Keep your head clear and see straight."

The gesture of Le Baron, half seen in the darkness, brought a strange trouble to Stover. It was as if, at the height of the eager confidence of his youth, some one had whispered in his ear and a shadowy hand had held before his eyes a gigantic temptation.

"Are there any questions you want to ask me?" said Le Baron, with a new feeling of affection toward the unprotected freshman whom he had so generously advised.

"No."

They sat silently. And all at once, as Stover gazed, from the high, misty walls and the elm-tops confounded in the night, a monstrous hand seemed to stretch down, impending over him, and the care-free windows suddenly to be transformed into myriad eyes, set on him in inquisition — eyes that henceforth indefatigably, remorselessly would follow him.

And with it something snapped, something fragile — the unconscious, simple democracy of boyhood. And, as it went, it went forever. This was the world rushing in,

dividing the hosts. This was the parting of the ways. The standards of judgment were the world's. It was not what he had thought. It was no longer the simple struggle. It was complex, disturbing, incomprehensible. To win he would have to change.

"It's been good of you to tell me all this," he said, giving his hand to Le Baron, and the words sounded hollow.

"Think over what I've said to you."

"I will."

"A man is known by his friends; remember that, Stover, if you don't anything else!"

"It's awfully good of you."

"I like you, Dink," said Le Baron, shaking hands warmly; "now you know the game, go in and win."

"It's awfully good of you," said Stover aimlessly. He stood watching Le Baron's strong, aristocratic figure go swinging across the dim campus in a straight, undeviating, well-calculated path.

"It's awfully good of him," he said mechanically, "awfully good. What a wonder he is!"

And yet, and yet, he could not define the new feeling — he was but barely conscious of it; was it rebellion or was it a lurking disappointment?

He stood alone, looking at the new world. It was no longer the world of the honest day. It was brilliant, fascinating, alluring, awakening strange, poignant emotions — but it was another world, and the way to it had just been shown him.

He turned abruptly and went toward his room, troubled, wondering why he was so troubled, vainly seeking the reason, knowing not that it lay in the destruction of a fragile thing — his first illusion.

CHAPTER III

TOUGH McCARTHY was in the communal rooms, busily delving into the recesses of a circus trunk, from which, from time to time, he emerged with the loot of the combined McCarthy family.

"Dink, my boy, cast your eye over my burglaries. Look at them. Aren't they lovely, aren't they fluffy and sweet? I don't know what half of 'em are, but won't they decorate the room? And every one, 'pon my honor, the gift of a peach who loves me! The whole family was watching, but I got 'em out right under their noses. Well, why not cheer me!"

He deposited on the floor a fragrant pile of assorted embroideries, table-covers, lace pincushions, and filmy mysteries purloined from feminine dressing-tables, which he rapidly proceeded to distribute about the room according to his advanced theories on decoration, which consisted in crowding the corners, draping the gas-jets, and clothing the picture-frames.

Stover sat silently, out of the mood.

"Here's three new scalps," continued McCarthy, producing some cushions. "Had to vow eternal love, and keep the dear girls separated — a blonde and two brunettes — but I got the pillows, my boy, I got 'em. And now sit back and hold on."

He made a third trip to the trunk, unaware of Stover's distracted mood, and came back chuckling, his arms heaped with photographs to his chin.

"One thousand and one Caucasian beauties, the pride of every State, the only girls who ever loved me. Look at 'em!"

He distributed a score of photographs, mustering them on the mantelpiece, pinning them to the already suspended flags, massing them in circles, ranging them in crosses and ascending files, and announced:

"Finest I could gather in. Only know a third of 'em, but the sisters know the rest. Isn't it a beauty parlor? Why, it'll make that blond warbler Stone, downstairs, feel like an amateur canary." Suddenly aware of Stover's opposite mood, he stopped. "What the deuce is the matter?"

"Nothing."

"You look solemn as an owl."

"I didn't know it."

"Well, how did you like Le Baron?"

"He's a corker!" said Stover militantly.

"I've been arranging about an eating-joint."

"You have?"

"We're in with a whole bunch of fellows. Gimbel, an Andover chap, is running it. Five dollars a week. We can see if we can stand it."

"Tough, go slow."

"Why so?"

Stover hesitated, looking at McCarthy's puzzled expression, and, looking, there seemed to be ten years' experience dividing them.

"Oh, I only mean we want to pick our friends carefully," he said at length.

"What difference does it make where we eat?"

"Well, it does."

"Oh, of course we want to enjoy ourselves."

Stover saw he did not understand and somehow, feel-

ing all the exuberant enthusiasm that actuated him, he hesitated to continue the explanation.

"By George, Dink," continued McCarthy comically solicitous of his scheme of decoration, "is there anything like the air of this place? You can't resist it, can you? Every one's out working for something. By George, I hope I can make good!"

"You will," said Stover. And in his mind was already something of the paternal protection that he had surprised in Hunter, the big man of the Andover crowd.

"If I'm to do anything at football I've got to put on a deuce of a lot of weight," said McCarthy a little disconsolately. "Guess my best chance is at baseball."

"The main thing, Tough, is to get out and try for everything," said Stover wisely. "Show you're a worker and it's going to count."

"That's good advice — who put it into your head?"

"Le Baron talked over a good many things with me," said Stover slowly. "He gave me a great many pointers. That's why I said go slow — we want to get with the right crowd."

"The right crowd?" said McCarthy, wheeling about and staring at his room-mate. "What the deuce are you talking about, Dink? Do you mean to say any one cares who in the blankety-blank we eat with?"

"Yes."

"What! Who the deuce's business is it to meddle in my affairs? Right crowd and wrong crowd — there's only one crowd, and each man's as good as the other. That's the way I look at it." He stopped, amazed, looking over at Stover. "Why, Dink, I never expected you to stand for the right and wrong crowd idea."

"I don't mean it the way you do," said Stover lamely

— for he was trying to argue with himself. "We're trying to do something here, aren't we — not just loaf through? Well, we want to be with the crowd that's doing things."

"Oh, if you mean it that way," said McCarthy dubiously, "that's different. I've been filled up for the last hour with nothing but society piffle by a measly-faced runt just out of the nursery called Schley. Skull and Bones — Locks and Keys — Wolf's-Head — gold bugs, hobgoblins, toe the line, heel the right crowd, mind your *p's* and *q's*, don't call your soul your own, don't look at a society house, don't for heaven's sake look at a pin in a necktie, never say 'bones' or 'fee-fie-fo-fum' out loud — never — oh, rats, what bosh!"

"Schley is an odious little toad," said Stover evasively. A little vain of his new knowledge and the destiny before him, he looked at the budding McCarthy with somewhat the anxiety of a mother hen, and said with great solemnity: "Don't go off half cock, old fellow."

"What! Have you fallen for the bugaboo?"

"My dear Tough," said Stover, with a little gorgeousness, "don't commit yourself until you know the whole business. You like the feeling here, don't you — the way every one is out working for something?"

"You bet I do."

"Well, it's the society system that does it."

"Come off."

"Wait and see."

"But what in the name of my aunt's cat's pants," said McCarthy, unwilling to relinquish the red rag, "what in the name of common sense is the holy sacred secret, that it can't be looked at, talked about, or touched?"

"Don't be a galoot, Tough," said Stover, in a superior way; "don't be a frantic ass. All that's exaggerated;

only little jack-asses like Schley are frightened by it. The real side, the serious side, is that the system is built up for the fellows who are going to do something for Yale. Now, just wait until you get your eyes open before you go shooting up the place."

But, as he stood in his own bedroom, with no Tough McCarthy to instruct and patronize, alone at his window, looking out at the sputtering arc lights with their splotchy regions of light and the busy windows of Pierson Hall across the way, listening to the chapel sending forth its quarter hour over the half-divined campus — he was not quite so confident of all he had proclaimed.

"It's different — different from school," he said to himself half apologetically. "It can't be the same as school. It's got to be organized differently. It's the same everywhere."

He went to bed, to sleep badly, restless and unconvinced, a stranger in strange places, staring at the flickering glare of the arc light against the window-panes, that light as unreal in comparison with the frank sunlight as the sudden bewildering introduction to the new, complex life was different from the direct and rugged simplicity of the unconscious democracy of school that had gone.

He awoke with a start, to find McCarthy and Dopey McNab, in striped pajamas, solicitously occupied in applying a lather to his bare feet. He sprang up with all the old zest, and, a free scrimmage taking place, wreaked satisfactory vengeance on the intruders.

"Hang you, Stover," said McNab weakly, "if you'd snored another minute I'd have won my dollar from McCarthy. If you want to be friends, nothing like being friendly, is there? Come on down to my rooms, we've got eggs and coffee right on tap. It's a bore going down

to the joint. To-morrow we'll all be slaves of the alarm clock again. Hang compulsory chapel."

They breakfasted hilariously under McNab's irresistible good humor. When at last Stover sauntered out to reconnoiter in company with McCarthy, a great change had come. The emotions of the night, the restless rebelliousness, had lost all their acuteness and seemed only a blurred memory. The college of the day was a different thing.

The late arrivals were swarming in carriages, or on top of heaped express-wagons, just as the school used to surge hilariously back. The windows were open, crowded with eager heads; the street corners clustered with swiftly assembling groups, sophomores almost entirely, past whom isolated, self-conscious freshmen went with averted gaze, to the occasional accompaniment of a whistled freshman march. Despite himself, Stover began to feel a little tightening in the shoulders, a little uncertainty in the swing of his walk, and something in his back seemed uneasily conscious of the concentrated attack of superior eyes.

They entered the campus, now the campus of the busy day. Across by the chapel, the fence was hidden under continually arriving groups of upper classmen, streaming to it in threes and fours in muscular enthusiasm. There was no division there. Gradually the troubled perceptions of the night before faded from Stover's consciousness. The light he saw was the clear noon of the day, and the air that filled his lungs the atmosphere of life and ambition.

At every step, runners for eating-houses, steam laundries, and tailors thrust cards in their hands, coaxing for orders. Every tree seemed plastered with notices of the awakening year, summons to trials for the musical

organizations and the glee club, offers to tutor, announcements of coming competitions, calls for candidates to a dozen activities.

"Hello, Dink, old boy!"

They looked up to behold Charley De Soto, junior over in the Sheffield Scientific School, bearing down upon them.

"Hello, Tough, glad to see you up here!"

De Soto had been at Lawrenceville with them, a comrade of the eleven, now prospective quarter-back for the coming season.

"You've put on weight, Dink," he said with critical approval. "You've got a bully chance this year. Are you reporting this afternoon?"

"Captain Dana asked me to come out for the varsity."

"I talked to him about you."

He asked a dozen questions, invited them over to see him, and was off.

They elbowed their way into the Coöp to make their purchases. The first issue of the *News* was already on sale, with its notices and its appeals.

They went out and past Vanderbilt toward their eating-joint. Off the campus, directly at the end of their path, a shape more like a monstrous shadow than a building rose up, solid, ivy-covered, blind, with great, prison-like doors, heavily padlocked.

"Fee-fi-fo-fum," said McCarthy.

"Which is it?" said Stover, in a different tone.

"Skull and Bones, of course," said McCarthy defiantly. "Look at it under your eyelids, quick; don't let any one see you."

Stover, without hearing him, gazed ahead, impressed despite himself. There it was, the symbol and the embodiment of all the subtle forces that had been disclosed

to him, the force that had stood amid the passing classes, imposing its authority unquestioned, waiting at the end of the long journey to give or withhold the final coveted success.

"Will I make it — will I ever make it?" he said to himself, drawing a long breath. "To be one of fifteen — only fifteen!"

"It is a scary sort of looking old place," said McCarthy. "They certainly have dressed it up for the part."

Still Stover did not reply. The dark, weighty, massive silhouette had somehow entered his imagination, never to be shaken off, to range itself wherever he went in the shadowy background of his dreams.

"It stands for democracy, Tough," he said, as they turned toward Chapel Street, and there was in his voice a certain emotion he couldn't control. "And I guess the mistakes it makes are pretty honest ones."

"Perhaps," said McCarthy stubbornly. "But why all this mumbo-jumbo business?"

"It doesn't affect you, does it?"

"The trouble is, it does," said McCarthy, with a laugh. "Do you know what I ought to do?"

"What?"

"Go right up and sit on the steps of the bloomin' old thing and eat a bag of cream-puffs."

Stover exploded with laughter.

"What the deuce would be the sense in that, you old anarchist?"

"To prove to my own satisfaction that I'm a man."

"Do you mean it?" said Stover, half laughing.

McCarthy scratched his head with one of the old boyish, comical gestures Stover knew so well.

"Well, perhaps I mean more than I think," he said,

grinning. "In another month I may get it as bad as that little uselessness Schley. By the way, he wants us over at his eating-joint."

"He does?"

"He's a horsefly sort of a cuss. You'll see, he'll fasten on to you just as soon as he thinks it worth while. Here we are."

They pressed their way, saluted with the imperious rattle of knives and plates, through three or four rooms, blue-gray with smoke, and found a vacant table in a far corner. A certain reserve was still prevalent in the noisy throng, which had not yet been welded together. Immediately a thin, wiry fellow, neatly dressed, hair plastered, affable and brimming over with energy, rose and pumped McCarthy's hand, slapping him effusively on the back.

"Bully! Glad to see you. This is Stover, of course. I'm Gimbel — Ray Gimbel; you don't know me, but I know you. Seen entirely too much of you on the wrong side of the field in the Andover-Lawrenceville game."

"How are you, Gimbel?" said Stover, not disliking the flattery, though perceiving it.

"We were greatly worried about you," said Gimbel directly, and with a sudden important seriousness. "There was a rumor around you had switched to Princeton."

"Oh, no."

"Well, we're certainly glad you didn't." Looking him straight in the face, he said with conviction: "You'll be captain here."

"I'm not worrying about that just at present," said Stover, amused.

"All right; that's my prophecy. I'll be back in a second."

He departed hastily, to welcome new arrivals with convulsive grip and rolling urbanity, passing like a doctor on his hospital rounds.

"Who's Gimbel?" said Stover, wondering, as he watched him, what new force he represented.

"Hurdler up at Andover, I believe."

In a moment Gimbel was back, engaging them in eager conclave.

"See here, there's a combination being gotten up," he said impersonally, "a sort of slate for our class football managers, and I want to get you fellows interested. Hotchkiss and St. Paul are going in together, and we want to organize the other schools. How many fellows are up from Lawrenceville?"

"About fifteen."

"We've got a corking good man from Andover not in any of the crowds up there, and a lot of us want to give him a good start. I'll have you meet him to-night at supper. If you fellows weren't out for football, we'd put one of you up for secretary and treasurer. You can name him if you want. I've got a hundred votes already, and we're putting through a deal with a Sheff crowd for vice-president that will give us thirty or forty more. Our man's Hicks — Frank Hicks — the best in the world. Say a good word for him, will you, wherever you can. See you to-night."

He was off to another table, where he was soon in animated conversation.

"Don't mix up in it," said Stover quietly.

"Why not?" said McCarthy. "A good old political shindig's lots of fun."

"Wait until we understand the game," said Stover, remembering Le Baron's advice not to commit himself to any crowd.

"But it would be such a lark."

Dink did not reply. Instead he was carefully studying the many types that crowded before his eyes. They ranged from the New Yorker, extra spick-and-span for his arrival, lost and ill at ease, speaking to no one; to older men in jerseys and sweaters, unshaven often, lolling back in their chairs, concerned with no one, talking with all.

The waiters were of his own class, who presently brought their plates to the tables they served and sat down without embarrassment. It was a heterogeneous assembly, with a preponderance of quiet, serious types, men to whom the financial problem was serious and college an opportunity to fit themselves for the grinding combat of life. Others were raw, decidedly without experience, opinionated, carrying on their shoulders a chip of somewhat bumptious pride. The talk was all of the doings of the night before, when several had fallen into the hands of mischief-bent sophomores.

"They caught Flanders down York Street and made him roll a peanut up to Billy's."

"Yes, and the darned fool hadn't sense enough to grin and bear it."

"So they gave him a beer shampoo."

"A what?"

"A beer shampoo."

"Did you hear about Regan?"

"Who's Regan?"

"He's a thundering big coal-heaver from out the woolly West."

"Oh, the fellow that started to scrap."

"That's the man."

"Give us the story, Buck."

"They had me up, doing some of my foolish stunts,"

said a fellow with a great moon of a face, little twinkling eyes, and a grotesque nose that sprang forth like a jagged promontory, "when, all at once, this elephant of a Regan saunters in coolly to see what's doing."

"Didn't know any better, eh?"

"Didn't know a thing. Well, no sooner did the sophs spot him than they set up a yell:

"'Who are you?'

"'Tom Regan.'

"'What's your class?'

"'Freshman.'

"'What in the blankety-blank are you doing here?'

"'Lookin' on.'

"With that, of course, they began just leaping up and down for joy, hugging one another; and a couple of them started in to tackle the old locomotive. The fellow, who's as strong as an ox, just gives a cough and a sneeze, scatters a few little sophs on the floor, and in a twinkling is in the corner, barricaded behind a table, looking as big as a house.

"'Tom, look out; they're going to shampoo you,' says I.

"'Is it all right?' he says, with a grin.

"'It's etiquette,' says I.

"'Come on, then,' says he very affably, and he strips off his coat and tosses it across the room, saying, 'It's my only one; look out for it.'

"Well, when the sophs saw him standing there, licking his chops, arms as big as hams, they sort of stopped and scratched their heads."

"I bet they did!" cried a couple.

"They didn't particularly like the prospect; but they were game, especially a little bantam of a rooster called Waring, who'd been putting us through our stunts.

"'I'm going in after that bug myself,' said he, with a yelp. 'Come on!'"

"Well, what happened, Buck?"

"Did they give it to him?"

"About fifteen minutes after the bouncers had swept us into the street with the rest of the *débris,* as the French say," said the speaker, with a far-off, reflective look, "one dozen of the happiest-looking sophs you ever saw went reeling back to the campus. They were torn and scratched, pummeled, bruised and bleeding, soaked from head to foot, shot to pieces, smeared with paint, not a button left or a necktie — but they were happy!"

"Why happy?"

"They had given *Regan* the shampoo."

Stover and McCarthy rose and made their way out past the group where Buck Waters, enthroned already as a natural leader, was tuning up the crowd.

"I came up in the train with Regan," said Stover, thrilling a little at the recital. "Cracky! I wish I'd seen the scrap."

"We'll call him out to-night for the wrestling," said McCarthy.

"He's a queer, plunging sort of animal," said Stover reflectively. "I wonder if he'll ever do anything up here?"

Saunders, riding past on a bicycle, pad protruding from his pocket, slowed up with a cordial hail:

"Howdy! I'm heeling the *News.* If you get any stories, pass them on to me. Thought you fellows were down at our joint. Where the deuce are you fellows grubbing?"

"We dropped into a place one of your Andover crowd's runnin'."

"Who's that?"

"Fellow called Gimbel."

Saunders rode on a bit, wheeled, came slowly back, resting his hand on Stover's shoulder.

"Look here," he said, frowning a little. "Gimbel's a good sort, clever and all that; but look here — you're not decided, are you?"

"No."

"Because we've been counting you fellows in with us. We've got a corking crowd, about twenty, and a nice, quiet place." He hesitated, choosing his words carefully: "I think you'll find the crowd congenial."

"When do you start in?" said Stover.

"To-morrow. Are you with us?"

"Glad to come."

"Bully!" He made a movement to start, and then added suddenly: "I say, fellows, of course you're not on to a good many games here, but don't get roped into any politics. It'll queer you quicker than anything else. You don't mind my giving you a tip?"

"Not at all," said Stover, smiling a little as he wondered what distinction Saunders made to himself between politics and politics.

"Ta-ta, then — perfectly bully you're with us. I'm off on this infernal *News* game — half a year's grind from twelve to ten at night — lovely, eh, when the snow and slush come?"

He sped on, and they went up to the rooms.

"I thought we'd better change," said Stover.

"This place is loaded up with wires — live wires," said McCarthy, scratching his head. "Well, go ahead, if you want to."

"Well, you see — we're all in the same house; it's more sociable."

"Oh, of course."

"And then, it'll be quieter."

"Yes, it'll be quieter."

A little constraint came to them. They went to their rooms silently, each aware that something had come into their comradeship which sooner or later would have to be met with frankness.

CHAPTER IV

STOVER had never been on the Yale field except through the multitudinous paths of his imagination. Huddled in the car crowded with candidates, he waited the first glimpse as Columbus questioned the sky or De Soto sought the sea. Three cars, filled with veterans and upper classmen, were ahead of him. He was among a score of sophomores, members of third and fourth squads, and a few of his own class with prep school reputations who sat silently, nervously overhauling their suits, adjusting buckles and shoe-laces, swollen to grotesque proportions under knotted sweaters and padded jerseys.

The trolley swung over a short bridge, and, climbing a hill, came to a slow stop. In an instant he was out, sweeping on at a dog-trot in the midst of the undulating, brawny pack. In front — a thing of air and wood — rose the climbing network of empty stands. Then, as they swept underneath, the field lay waiting, and at the end two thin, straight lines and a cross-bar. No longer were the stands empty or the breeze devoid of song and cheers. The goal was his — the goal of Yale — and, underfoot at last, the field more real to him than Waterloo or Gettysburg!

He camped down, one among a hundred, oblivious of his companions, hands locked over his knees, his glance strained down the field to where, against the blue sweater of a veteran, a magic Y was shining white. For a moment he felt a plunging despair — he was but one among so many. The whole country seemed congregated there

in competition. Others seemed to overtop him, to be built of bone and muscle beyond his strength. He felt a desire to shrink back and steal away unperceived, as he had that awful moment when, on his first test at school, he had been told that he must stand up and fill the place of a better man.

Then he was on his feet, in obedience to a shouted command, journeying up the field to where beyond the stands a tackling dummy on loose pulleys swung like a great scarecrow.

"Here, now, get some action into this," said a fiery little coach, Tompkins, quarter-back a dozen seasons before. "Line up. Get some snap to it. First man. Hard — hit it hard!"

The first three — heavy linesmen, still soft and short of breath — made lumbering, slipping attempts.

Tompkins was in a blaze of fury.

"Hold up! What do you think this is? I didn't ask you to hug your grandmother; I told you to tackle that dummy! Hit it hard — break it in two! If you can't tackle, we don't want you around. Tackle to throw your man back! Tackle as if the whole game depended on it. Come on, now. Next man. Jump at it! Rotten! Rotten! Oh, squeeze it. Don't try to butt it over — you're not a goat! Half the game's the tackling! Next man. Oh, girls — girls! What is this bunch, anyhow — a young ladies' seminary? Here! Stop — stop! You're up at Yale now. I'll show you how we tackle!"

Heedless of his street clothes, of the grotesqueness of the thing, of all else but the savage spark he was trying to communicate, he went rushing into the dummy with a headlong plunge that shook the ropes.

He was up in a moment, forgetting the dust that clung to him, shouting in his shrill voice:

"Come on, now, bang into it! Yes, but hold on to it! Squeeze it. Better — more snap there! Get out the way! Come on! Rotten! Take that again — on the jump!"

Stover suddenly felt the inflaming seriousness of Yale, the spirit that animated the field. Everything was in deadly earnest; the thing of rags swinging grotesquely was as important as the tackle that on a championship field stood between defeat and victory.

His turn came. He shot forward, left the turf in a clean dive, caught the dummy at the knees, and shook the ground with the savageness of his tackle.

"Out of the way, quick — next man!" cried the driving voice.

There was not a word of praise for what he knew had been a perfect tackle. A second and a third time he flung himself heedlessly at the swinging figure, in a desperate attempt to win the withheld word of approbation.

"He might at least have grunted," he said to himself, tumbling to his feet, "the little tyrant."

In a moment Tompkins, without relaxing a jot of his nervous driving, had them spread over the field, flinging themselves on a dozen elusive footballs, while always his voice, unsatisfied, propelling, drove them:

"Faster, faster! Get into it — let go yourselves. Throw yourself at it. Oh, hard, harder!"

Ten minutes of practise starts under his leash, and they ended, enveloped in steam, lungs shaken with quick, convulsive breaths.

"Enough for to-day. Back to the gymnasium on the trot; run off some of that fatty degeneration. Here, youngster, a word with you."

Stover stepped forward.

"What's your name?"

"Stover."

To his profound disappointment, Tompkins did not recognize that illustrious name.

"Where from?"

"Lawrenceville. Played end."

Tompkins looked him over, a little grimly. "Oh, yes; I've heard something about you. Look here, ever do any punting?"

"Some, but only because I had to. I'm no good at it."

"Let's see what you can do."

Stover caught the ball tossed and put all his strength into a kick that went high but short.

"Try another."

The second and third attempts were no better.

"Well, that's pretty punk," said Tompkins. "Dana wants to give you a try on the second. Run over now and report. Oh, Stover!"

Dink halted, to see Tompkins' caustic scrutiny fixed on him.

"Yes, sir."

"Stover, just one word for your good. You come up with a big prep school reputation. Don't make an ass of yourself. Understand; don't get a swelled head. That's all."

"Precious little danger of that here," said Dink a little rebelliously to himself, as he jogged over to the benches where the varsity subs were camped. Le Baron waved him a recognition, but no more. It was as if the gesture meant:

"I've started you. Now stand on your own feet. Don't look to me for help."

For the rest of the practise he sat huddled in his sweater, waiting expectantly as each time Captain Dana passed down the line, calling out the candidates for trials

in the brief scrimmages that took place. The afternoon ended without an opportunity coming to him, and he jogged home, in the midst of the puffing crowd, with a sudden feeling of his own unimportance.

He had barely time to get his shower, and run into the almost deserted eating club for a quick supper, when Gimbel appeared, crying:

"I say, Stover, bolt the grub and hoof it. We assemble over by Osborne."

"Where's the wrestling?"

"Don't know. Some vacant lot. Ever do any?"

"Don't know a thing about it."

"We're going to call out a chap called Robinson from St. Paul's, Garden City, for the lightweight, and Regan for the heavy," said Gimbel, who, of course, had been busy during the afternoon. "Thought of you for the middleweight."

"Lord! get some one who knows the game," said Stover, following him out.

"Have you thought of any one you'd like to run for secretary and treasurer?" said Gimbel, locking arms in a cordial way.

"No."

"I've got the whole thing organized sure as a steel trap."

"You haven't lost any time," said Stover, smiling.

"That's right — heaps of fun."

"What are *you* going to run for?" said Stover, looking at him.

"I? Nothing now. Fence orator, perhaps, later," said Gimbel frankly. "It's the fun of the game interests me — the organizing, pulling wires, all that sort of thing. I'm going to have a lot of fun here."

"Look here, Gimbel," said Stover, yielding to a sudden

appreciation of the other's openness. "Isn't this sort of thing going to get a lot of fellows down on you?"

"Queer me?" said Gimbel, laughing.

The word was still new to Stover, who showed his perplexity.

"That's a great word," added his companion. "You'll hear a lot of it before you get through. It's a sort of college bug that multiplies rapidly. Will politics 'queer' me — keep me out of societies? Probably; but then, I couldn't make 'em anyway. So I'm going to have my fun. And I'll tell you now, Stover, I'm going to get a good deal more out of my college career than a lot of you fellows."

"Why include me?"

"Well, Stover, you're going to make a sophomore society, and go sailing along."

"Oh, I don't know."

"Yes, you do. We don't object to such men as you, who have the right. It's the lame ducks we object to."

"Lame ducks?" said Stover, puzzled as well as surprised at this spokesman of an unsuspected proletariat opposition.

"'Lame ducks' is the word: the fellows who would never make a society if it weren't for pulls, for the men ahead — the cripples that all you big men will be trying to bolster up and carry along with you into a senior society."

"I'm not on to a good deal of this," said Stover, puzzled.

"I know you're not. Look here." Gimbel, releasing his arm, faced him suddenly. "You think I'm a politician out to get something for myself."

"Yes, I do."

"Well, I am — I'm frank about it. There's a whole

mass of us here who are going to fight the sophomore society system tooth and nail, and I'm with them. When you're in the soph crowd you mightn't like what I'm saying, and then again you may come around to our way of thinking. However, I want you to know that I'm hiding nothing — that I'm fighting in the open. We may be on opposite sides, but I guess we can shake hands. How about it?"

"I guess we can always do that," said Stover, giving his hand. The man puzzled him. Was his frankness deep or a diplomatic assumption?

"And now let's have no pretenses," continued Gimbel, on the same line, with a quick analytical glance. "You're going with your crowd; better join one of their eating-joints."

Stover was genuinely surprised.

"Have you already arranged it?" said Gimbel, laughing.

"Gimbel," said Stover directly, "I'm not quite sure about you."

"You don't know whether I'm a faker or not."

"Exactly."

"Stover, I'm a politician," said Gimbel frankly. "I'm out for a big fight. I know the game here. I wouldn't talk to every one as I talk to you. I want you to understand me — more, I want you to like me. And I feel with you that the only way is to be absolutely honest. You see, I'm a politician," he said, with a laugh. "I've learned how to meet different men. Sometime I'm going to talk over things with you — seriously. Here we are now. I've got a bunch of fellows to see. McCarthy's probably looking for you. Don't make up your mind in a hurry about me — or about a good many things here. Ta-ta!"

Stover watched him go gaily into the crowd, distributing bluff, vociferous welcomes, hilariously acclaimed. The man was new, represented a new element, a strange, dimly perceived, rebellious mass, with ideas that intruded themselves ungratefully on his waking vision.

"Is he sincere?" he said to himself — a question that he was to apply a hundred times in the life that was beginning.

CHAPTER V

HELLO, there, Stover!"

"Stover, over here!"

"Oh, Dink Stover, this way!"

Over the bared heads of the bobbing, shifting crowd he saw Hunter and McCarthy waving to him. He made his way through the strange assorted mass of freshmen to his friends, where already, instinctively, a certain picked element had coalesced. A dozen fellows, clean-cut, steady of head and eye, carrying a certain unmistakable, quiet assurance, came about him, gripping him warmly, welcoming him into the little knot with cordial acknowledgment. He felt the tribute, and he liked it. They were of his own kind, his friends to be, now and in the long reaches of life.

"Fall in, fall in!"

Ahead of them, the upper classes were already in rank. Behind, the freshmen, unorganized, distrustful, were being driven into lines of eight and ten by seniors, pipe in mouth, authoritative, quiet, fearfully enveloped in dignity. Cheers began to sound ahead, the familiar *brek-e-kek-kex* with the class numeral at the end. A cry went up:

"Here, we must have a cheer."

"Give us a cheer."

"Start her up."

"Lead a cheer, some one."

"Lead a cheer, Hunter."

"Lead the cheer, Gimbel."

"Lead the cheer, Stover."

"Come on, Stover!"

A dozen voices took up his name. He caught the infection. Without hesitating, he stepped by Hunter, who was hesitating, and cried:

"Now, fellows, all together — the first cheer for the class! Are you ready? Let her rip!"

The cheer, gathering momentum, went crashing above the noises of the street. The college burst into a mighty shout of acclaim — another class was born!

Suddenly ahead the dancing lights of the senior torches began to undulate. Through the mass a hoarse roar went rushing, and a sudden muscular tension.

"Grab hold of me."

"Catch my arm."

"Grip tight."

"Get in line."

"Move up."

"Get the swing."

Stover found himself, arms locked over one another's shoulders, between Schley, who had somehow kept persistently near him, and a powerful, smiling, blond-haired fellow who shouted to him:

"My name's Hungerford — Joe Hungerford. Glad to know you. Down from Groton."

It was a name known across the world for power in finance, and the arm about Stover's shoulder was taut with the same sentimental rush of emotion.

Down the moving line suddenly came surging the chant:

"Chi Rho Omega Lambda Chi!
We meet to-night to celebrate
The Omega Lambda Chi!"

Grotesquely, lumberingly, tripping and confused, they tried to imitate the forward classes, who were surging in the billowy rhythm of the elusive serpentine dance.

"How the deuce do they do it?"

"Get a skip to it, you ice-wagons."

"All to the left, now."

"No, to the right."

Gradually they found themselves; hoarse, laughing, struggling, sweeping inconsequentially on behind the singing, cheering college.

Before Dink knew it, the line had broken with a rush, and he was carried, struggling and pushing, into a vacant lot, where all at once, out of the tumult and the riot, a circle opened and spread under his eyes.

Seniors in varsity sweaters, with brief authoritative gestures, forced back the crowd, stationed the fretful lights, commanding and directing:

"First row, sit down."

"Down in front, there."

"Kneel behind."

"Freshmen over here."

"Get a move on!"

"Stop that shoving."

"How's the space, Cap?"

In the center, Captain Dana waited with an appraising eye.

"All right. Call out the lightweights."

Almost immediately, from the opposite sophomores, came a unanimous shout:

"Farquahar! Dick Farquahar!"

"Come on, Dick!"

"Get in the ring!"

Out into the ring stepped an agile, nervous figure, acclaimed by all his class.

"A cheer for Farquahar, fellows!"

"One, two, three!"

"*Farquahar!*"

"Candidate from the freshman class!"

"Candidate!"

"Robinson!"

"Teddy Robinson!"

"Harris!"

"No, Robinson — Robinson!"

Gimbel's voice dominated the outcry. There was a surging, and then a splitting of the crowd, and Robinson was slung into the ring.

In the midst of contending cheers, the antagonists stripped to the belt and stood forth to shake hands, their bared torsos shining in high lights against the mingled shadows of the audience.

The two, equally matched in skill, went tumbling and whirling over the matted sod, twisting and flopping, until by a sudden hold Robinson caught his adversary in a half nelson and for the brief part of a second had the two shoulders touching the ground. The second round likewise went to the freshman, who was triumphant after a struggle of twenty minutes.

"Middleweights!"

"Candidate from the sophomore class!"

"Candidate from the freshman!"

"Fisher!"

"Denny Fisher!"

The sophomore stepped forth, tall, angular, well knit. Among the freshmen a division of opinion arose:

"Say, Andover, who've you got?"

"Any one from Hotchkiss?"

"What's the matter with French?"

"He doesn't know a thing about wrestling."

"How about Doc White?"

"Not heavy enough."

The seniors began to be impatient.

"Hurry up, now, freshmen, hurry up!"

"Produce something!"

Still a hopeless indecision prevailed.

"I don't know any one."

"Jack's too heavy."

"Say, you Hill School fellows, haven't you got some one?"

"Some one's got to go out."

The sophomores, seizing the advantage, began to gibe at them:

"Don't be afraid, freshmen!"

"We won't hurt you."

"We'll let you down easy."

"Take it by default."

"Call time on them."

"I don't know a thing about it," said Stover, between his teeth, to Hungerford, his hands twitching impatiently, his glance fixed hungrily on the provokingly amused face of the sophomore champion.

"I'm too heavy or I'd go."

"I've a mind to go, all the same."

McCarthy, who knew his impulses of old, seized him by the arm.

"Don't get excited, Dink, old boy; you don't know anything about wrestling."

"No, but I can *scrap!*"

The outcry became an uproar:

"Quitters!"

"'Fraid cats!"

"Poor little freshmen!"

"They're in a funk."

"By George, I can't stand that," said Stover, setting his teeth, the old love of combat sweeping over him. "I'm going to have a chance at that duck myself!"

He thrust his way forward, shaking off McCarthy's hold, stepped over the reclining front ranks, and, springing into the ring, faced Dana.

"I'm no wrestler, sir, but if there's no one else I'll have a try at it."

There was a sudden hush, and then a chorus:

"Who is it?"

"Who's that fellow?"

"What's his name?"

"Oh, freshmen, who's your candidate?"

"Stover!"

"Stover, a football man!"

"Fellow from Lawrenceville!"

The seniors had him over in a corner, stripping him, talking excitedly.

"Say, Stover, what do you know about it?"

"Not a thing."

"Then go in and attack."

"All right."

"Don't wait for him."

"No."

"He's a clever wrestler, but you can get his nerve."

"His nerve?"

"Keep off the ground."

"Off the ground, yes."

"Go right in; right at him; tackle him hard; shake him up."

"All right," he said, for the tenth time. He had heard nothing that had been said. He was standing erect, looking in a dazed way at the hundreds of eyes that were dancing about him in the living, breathing pit in which

he stood. He heard a jumble of roars and cheers, and one clear cry, McCarthy crying:

"Good old Dink!"

Some one was rolling up his trousers to the knee; some one was flinging a sweater over his bared back; some one was whispering in his ear:

"Get right to him. Go for him — don't wait!"

"Already, there," said Captain Dana's quiet, matter-of-fact voice.

"Already, here."

"Shake hands!"

The night air swept over him with a sudden chill as the sweaters were pulled away. He went forth while Dana ran over the rules and regulations, which he did not understand at all. He stood then about five feet ten, in perfect condition, every muscle clearly outlined against the wiry, spare Yankee frame, shoulders and the sinews of his arms extraordinarily developed. From the moment he had stepped out, his eyes had never left Fisher's. Combat transformed his features, sending all the color from his face, narrowing the eyes, and drawing tense the lips. Combat was with him always an overmastering rage in the leash of a cold, nervous, pulsating logic, which by the very force of its passion gave to his expression an almost dispassionate cruelty — a look not easy to meet, that somehow, on the instant, impressed itself on the crowd with the terrific seriousness of the will behind.

"Wiry devil."

"Good shoulders."

"Great fighting face, eh?"

"Scrapper, all right."

"I'll bet he is."

"Shake hands!"

Stover caught the other's hand, looked into his eyes,

read something there that told him, science aside, that he was the other's master; and suddenly, rushing forward, he caught him about the knees and, lifting him bodily in the air, hurled him through the circle in a terrific tackle.

The onslaught was so sudden that Fisher, unable to guard himself, went down with a crash, the fall broken by the bodies of the spectators.

A roar, half laughter, half hysteria, went up.

"Go for him!"

"Good boy, Stover!"

"Chew him up!"

"Is he a scrapper!"

"Say, this *is* a fight!"

"Wow!"

Dana, clapping them on the shoulders, brought them back to the center of the ring and restored them to the position in which they had fallen. Fisher, plainly shaken up, immediately worked himself into a defensive position, recovering his breath, while Stover frantically sought some instinctive hold with which to turn him over.

Suddenly an arm shot out, caught his head in chancery, and before he knew it he was underneath and the weight of Fisher's body was above, pressing him down. He staggered to his feet in a fury, maddened, unreasoning, and went down again, always with the dead weight above him.

"Here, that won't do," he said to himself savagely, recovering his clarity of vision; "I mustn't lose strength."

All at once, before he knew how it had been done, Fisher's arm was under his, cutting over his neck, and slowly but irresistibly his shoulders were turning toward the fatal touch. Every one was up, shouting:

"Turn him over!"

"Finish him up!"
"Hold out, freshman!"
"Hold out!"
"Flop over!"
"Don't give in!"
"Stick it out!"

With a sudden expenditure of strength, he checked the turning movement, desperately striving against the cruel hold.

"Good boy, Stover!"
"That's the stuff!"
"Show your grit!"
"Hold out!"
"Show your nerve!"

In a second he had reasoned it out. He was caught — he knew it. He could resist three minutes, five minutes, slowly sinking against his ebbing strength, frantically cheered for a spectacular resistance — and then what? If he had a chance, it was in preserving every ounce of his strength for the coming rounds.

"All right; you've got me this time," he said coldly, and, relaxing, let his shoulders drop.

Dana's hand fell stingingly on him, announcing the fall. He rose amid an angry chorus:

"What the deuce!"
"Say, I don't stand for that!"
"Thought he was game."
"Game nothing!"
"Lost his nerve."
"Sure he did."
"Well, I'll be damned."
"A quitter — a rank quitter!"

He walked to his seconds, angry at the misunderstanding.

"Here, I know what I'm doing," he said in short, quick breaths, forgetting that he, a freshman, was addressing the lords of creation. He was a captain again, his own captain, conducting his own battle. "I'll get him yet. Rub up this shoulder, quick."

"Keep off the ground," said one mentor.

"You bet I will."

"Why the deuce did you give in so easily?"

"Because there are two more rounds, and I'm going to use my head — hang it!"

"He's right, too," said the first senior, rubbing him fiercely with the towel. "Now, sport, don't monkey with him until you've jarred him up a couple of times!"

"That's what I'm going to do!"

"Time!" cried the voice of Dana.

This time he retreated slowly, drawing Fisher unwarily toward his edge of the ring, and then suddenly, as the sophomore lunged at him, shot forward again, in a tackle just below the waist, raised him clear off the ground, spun him around, and, putting all his force into his back as a wood-chopper swings an ax, brought him down crashing, clear across the ring. It was a fearful tackle, executed with every savage ounce of rage within him, the force of which momentarily stunned him. Fisher, groggy under the bruising impact, barely had time to turn on his stomach before Stover was upon him.

Dink immediately sprang up and back, waiting in the center of the ring. The sophomore, too dazed to reason clearly, yielding only to his anger at the sudden reversal, foolishly struggled to his feet and came staggering toward him. A second time Stover threw all his dynamic strength into another crashing tackle. This time Fisher went over on his back with a thump, and, though he turned instinctively, both shoulders had landed squarely

on the turf, and, despite his frantic protests, a roar went up as Dana allotted the fall to Stover.

This time, as he went to his corner, it was amid pandemonium:

"You're a corker, freshman!"

"Oh, you bulldog!"

"Tear him up!"

"You're the stuff!"

"Good head, freshman!"

"Good brain-work!"

Several upper classmen came hurriedly over to his corner, slapping him on the back, volunteering advice.

"Clear out," said his mentor proudly. "This rooster can take care of himself."

Fisher came up for the third round, visibly groggy and shaken by the force of the tackles he had received, but game. Twice Stover, watching his chance, dove under the groping hands and flung him savagely to the ground. Once Fisher caught him, as they lay on the ground, in a hold that might have been decisive earlier in the match. As it was, Stover felt with a swift horror the arm slipping under his arm, half gripping his neck. The wet heat of the antagonistic body over his inflamed all the brute in him. The strength was now his. He tore himself free, scrambled to his feet, and hurled Fisher a last time clean through into the scattering crowd, where he lay stunned, too weak to resist the viselike hands that forced his shoulders to the ground.

Dana hauled Stover to his feet, a little groggy.

"Some tackling, freshman! Bout's yours! Call out the heavyweights!"

Scarcely realizing that it was his captain who had spoken, Dink stood staring down at Fisher, white and conquered, struggling to his feet in the grip of friends.

"I say, Fisher," he said impulsively, "I hope I didn't shake you up too much. I saw red; I didn't know what I was doing."

"You did me all right," said the sophomore, giving his hand. "That tackle of yours would break a horse in two. Shake!"

"Thank you," said Stover, flustered and almost ashamed before the other's perfect sportsmanship. "Thank you very much, sir!"

He went to his corner, smothered under frantic slaps and embraces, hearing his name resounding again and again on the thunders of his classmates. The bout had been spectacular; every one was asking who he was.

"Stover, eh, of Lawrenceville!"

"Gee, what a fierce tackler!"

"Ridiculous for Fisher to be beaten!"

"Oh, is it? How'd you like to get a fall like that?"

"Played end."

"Captain at Lawrenceville."

"He ought to be a wonder."

"Say, did you see the face he got on him?"

"Enough to scare you to death."

"It got Fisher, all right."

While he was being rubbed down and having his clothes thrust upon him, shivering in every tense muscle, which, now the issue was decided, seemed to have broken from his control, suddenly a hand gripped his, and, looking up, he saw the face of Tompkins, ablaze with the fire of the professional spectator.

"I'm not shaking hands on your brutal old tackling," he said, with a look that belied his words. "It's the other thing — the losing the first fall. Good brain-work, boy; that's what'll count in football."

The grip of the veteran cut into his hand; in Tomp-

kins's face also was a reminiscent flash of the fighting face that somehow, in any test, wins half the battle.

The third bout went to the sophomores, Regan, the choice of the class, being nowhere to be found. But the victory was with the freshmen, who, knit suddenly together by the consciousness of a power to rise to emergencies, carried home the candidates in triumph.

McCarthy, with his arms around Stover as he had done in the old school days after a grueling football contest, bore Dink up to their rooms with joyful, bearlike hugs. Other hands were on him, wafting him up the stairs as though riding a gale.

"Here, let me down will you, you galoots!" he cried vainly from time to time.

Hilariously they carried him into the room and dumped him down. Other freshmen, following, came to him, shaking his hand, pounding him on the back.

"Good boy, Stover!"

"What's the use of wrestling, anyhow?"

"You're it!"

"We're all for you!"

"The old sophomores thought they had it cinched."

"Three cheers for Dink Stover!"

"One more!"

"And again!"

"Yippi!"

McCarthy, doubled up with laughter, stood in front of him, gazing hilariously, proudly down.

"You old Dink, you, what right had you to go out for it?"

"None at all."

"How the deuce did you have the nerve?"

"How?" For the first time the question impressed

itself on him. He scratched his head and said simply, unconscious of the wide application of what he said: "Gee! guess I didn't stop to think how rotten I was."

He went to bed, gorgeously happy with the first throbbing, satisfying intoxication of success. The whole world must be concerned with him now. He was no longer unknown; he had emerged, freed himself from the thralling oblivion of the mass.

CHAPTER VI

STOVER fondly dreamed, that night, of his triumphal appearance on the field the following day, greeted by admiring glances and cordial handshakes, placed at once on the second eleven, watched with new interest by curious coaches, earning an approving word from the captain himself.

When he did come on the field, embarrassed and reluctantly conscious of his sudden leap to world-wide fame, no one took the slightest notice of him. Tompkins did not vouchsafe a word of greeting. To his amazement, Dana again passed him over and left him restless on the bench, chafing for the opportunity that did not come. The second and the third afternoon it was the same — the same indifference, the same forgetfulness. And then he suddenly realized the stern discipline of it all — unnecessary and stamping out individuality, it seemed to him at first, but subordinating everything to the one purpose, eliminating the individual factor, demanding absolute subordination to the whole, submerging everything into the machine — that was not a machine only, when once accomplished, but an immense idea of sacrifice and self-abnegation. Directly, clearly visualized, he perceived, for the first time, what he was to perceive in every side of his college career, that a standard had been fashioned to which, irresistibly, subtly, he would have to conform; only here, in the free domain of combat, the standard that imposed itself upon him was something bigger than his own.

Meanwhile the college in all its activities opened before him, absorbing him in its routine. The great mass of his comrades to be gradually emerged from the blurred mists of the first day. He began to perceive hundreds of faces, faces that fixed themselves in his memory, ranging themselves, dividing according to his first impression into sharply defined groups. Fellows sought him out, joined him when he crossed the campus, asked him to drop in.

In chapel he found himself between Bob Story, a quiet, self-contained, likable fellow, popular from the first from a certain genuine sweetness and charity in his character, son of Judge Story of New Haven, one of the most influential of the older graduates; and on the other side Swazey, a man of twenty-five or six, of a type that frankly amazed him — rough, uncouth, with thick head and neck, rather flat in the face, intrusive, yellowish eyes, under lip overshot, one ear maimed by a scar, badly dressed, badly combed, and badly shod. Belying this cloutish exterior was a quietness of manner and the dreamy vision of a passionate student. Where he came from Stover could not guess, nor by what strange chance of life he had been thrown there. In front of him was the great bulk of Regan, always bent over a book for the last precious moments, coming and going always with the same irresistible steadiness of purpose. He had not been at the wrestling the opening night, he had not been out for football, because his own affairs, his search for work, were to him more important; and, looking at him, Stover felt that he would never allow anything to divert him from his main purpose in college — first, to earn his way, and, second, to educate himself. Stover, with others, had urged him to report for practise, knowing, though not proclaiming it, that there lay the way to

friendships that, once gained, would make easy his problem.

"Not yet, Stover," said Regan, always with the same finality in his tone. "I've got to see my way clear; I've got to know if I can down that infernal Greek and Latin first. If I can, I'm coming out."

"Where do you room?" said Stover.

"Oh, out about a mile — a sort of rat-hole."

"I want to drop in on you."

"Come out sometime."

"Drop in on me."

"I'm going to."

"I say, Regan, why don't you see Le Baron?"

"What for?"

"Why, he might — might give you some good tips," said Stover, a little embarrassed.

"Exactly. Well, I prefer to help myself."

Stover broke out laughing.

"You're a fierce old growler!"

"I am."

"I wish you'd come around a little and let the fellows know you."

"That can wait."

"I say, Regan," said Stover suddenly, "would you mind doing the waiting over at our joint?"

"Why should I?"

"Why, I thought," said Stover, not saying what he had thought, "I thought perhaps you'd find it more convenient at Commons."

"Is that what you really thought?" said Regan, with a quizzical smile.

The man's perfect simplicity and unconsciousness impressed Stover more than all the fetish of enthroned up-

per classmen; he was always a little embarrassed before Regan.

"No," he said frankly, "but, Regan, I would like to have you with us, and I think you'd like it."

"We'll talk it over," said Regan deliberately. "I'll think it over myself. Good-by."

Stover put out his hand instinctively. Their hands held each other a moment, and their eyes met in open, direct friendship.

He stood a moment thoughtfully, after they had parted. What he had offered had been offered impulsively. He began to wonder if it would work out without embarrassment in the intimacy of the eating-joint.

The crowd that they had joined — as Gimbel had predicted — had taken a long dining-room cheerily lighted, holding one table, around which sixteen ravenous freshmen managed to squeeze in turbulent, impatient clamor.

Bob Story, Hunter and his crowd, Hungerford and several men from Groton and St. Mark's, Schley and his room-mate Troutman made up a coterie that already had in it the elements of the leadership of the class.

As he was deliberating, he perceived Joe Hungerford rolling along, with his free and easy slouch, immersed in the faded blue sweater into which he had lazily bolted to make chapel, a cap riding on the exuberant wealth of blond hair. He broached the subject at once:

"Say, Hungerford, you're the man I want."

"Fire away."

Stover detailed his invitation to Regan, concluding:

"Now, tell me frankly what you think."

"Have him with us, by all means," said Hungerford impulsively.

"Might it not be a little embarrassing? How do you think the other fellows would like it?"

"Why, there's only one way to take it," said Hungerford directly. "Our crowd's too damned select now to suit me. We need him a darn sight more than he needs us."

"I knew you'd feel that way."

"By George, that's why I came to Yale. If there are any little squirts in the crowd think differently, a swift kick where it'll do the most good will clear the atmosphere."

Stover looked at him with impulsive attraction. He was boyish, unspoiled, eager.

"Now, look here, Dink — you don't mind me calling you that, do you?" continued Hungerford, with a little hesitation.

"Go ahead."

"I want you to understand how I feel about things. I've got about everything in the world to make a conceited, pompous, useless little ass out of me, and about two hundred people who want to do it. I wish to blazes I was starting where Regan is — where my old dad did; I might do something worth while. Now, I don't want any hungry, boot-licking little pups around me whose bills I am to pay. I want to come in on your scale, and I'm mighty glad to get the chance. That's why my allowance isn't going to be one cent more than yours; and I want you to know it. Now, as for this fellow Regan — he sounds like a man. I tell you what I'll do. I'll fix it up in a shake of a lamb's tail."

"Question is whether Regan will come," said Stover doubtfully.

"By George, I'll make him. We'll go right out together and put it to him."

Which they did; and Regan, yielding to the open cordiality of Hungerford, accepted and promised to change at the end of his week.

In the second week, having satisfactorily arranged his affairs — by what slender margin no one ever knew — Regan reported for practise. He had played a little football in the Middle West and, though his knowledge was crude, he learned slowly, and what he learned he never lost. His great strength, and a certain quality which was moral as well as physical, very shortly won him the place of right guard, where with each week he strengthened his hold.

Regan's introduction at the eating-joint had been achieved without the embarrassment Stover had feared. He came and went with a certain natural dignity that was not assumed, but was inherent in the simplicity of his character. He entered occasionally into the conversation and always, when the others were finished and tarrying over the tobacco, brought his plate to a vacant place and ate his supper; but, that through, though often urged, went his purposeful way, with always that certain solitary quality about him that made approach difficult and had left him friendless.

On the fourth afternoon of practise, as Stover, restraining the raging impatience within him, resolved that at all costs he would not show the chafing, went to his place on the imprisoning bench, watching with famished eyes the contending lines, Dana, without warning, called from the open field:

"Stover! Stover! Out here!"

He jumped up, oblivious of everything but the sudden thumping of his heart and the curious stir in the ranks of the candidates.

"Here, leave your sweater," shouted Tompkins, who had repeated the summons.

"Oh, yes."

Clumsily entangled in the folds of his sweater, he struggled to emerge. Tompkins, amid a roar of laughter, caught the arms and freed him, grinning at the impetuousness with which Stover went scudding out.

On the way he passed the man he was replacing, returning rebelliously with a half antagonistic, half apprehensive glance at him.

"Take left end on the scrub," said Dana, who was not in the line of scrimmage. "Farley, give him the signals."

The scrub quarter hastily poured into his ears the simple code. He took up his position. The play was momentarily halted by one of the coaches, who was hauling the center men over the coals. Opposite Stover, Bangs, senior, was standing, legs spread, hands on his hips, looking at him with a look Stover never forgot. For three years he had plugged along his way, doggedly holding his place in the scrubs, patiently waiting for the one opportunity to come. Now, at last, after the years of servitude, standing on the coveted side of the line, suddenly here was a freshman with a big reputation come in the challenge that might destroy all the years of patience and send him back into the oblivion of the scrubs.

Stover understood the appealing fury of the look, even in all the pitilessness of his ambition. Something sharp went through him at the thought of the man for whose position, ruthlessly, fiercely, he was beginning to fight.

Five or six coaches, always under the direction of

Case, head coach, were moving restlessly about the field, watching for the first rudimentary faults. One or two gave him quick appraising looks. Stover, moving restlessly back and forth, his eyes on the ground, too conscious of the general curiosity, awaited the moment of action. The discussion around the center ended.

"Varsity take the ball," called out Dana; "get into it, every one!"

The two lines sprang quickly into position, the coaches, nervous and vociferous, jumping behind the unfortunate objects of their wrath, while the air was filled with shrieked advice and exhortation.

"On the jump, there, Biggs!"
"Charge low!"
"Oh, get down, get down!"
"Break up this play!"
"Wake up!"
"Smash into it!"
"Charge!"
"Now!"
"Block that man!"
"Throw him back!"
"Get behind!"
"Push him on!"
"Shove him on!"
"Get behind and shove!"
"Shove!"
"Shove! Oh, shove!"

Attack and defense were still crude. The play had gone surging around the opposite end, but in a halting way, the runner impeded by his own interference. Stover, sweeping around at full speed, was able to down the half from behind, just as the interference succeeded

in clearing the way. At once it was a chorus of angry shouts, each coach descending on the particular object of his wrath.

"Beautiful!"

"You're a wonder!"

"What are you doing,—growing to the ground?"

"What did I tell you?"

"Say, interference, is this a walking match?"

"Wonderful speed—almost got away from the opposite end."

"Say, Charley, a fast lot of backs we've got."

"Line 'em up!"

Two or three plays through the center, struggling and squirming in the old fashion of football, were succeeded by several tries at his side. Stover, besides three years' hard drilling, had a natural gift of diagnosis, which, with the savagery of his tackling, made him, even at this period, an unusual end, easily the best of the candidates on the field. He stood on guard, turning inside the attack, or running along with it and gradually forcing his man out of bounds. At other times he went through the loose interference and caught his man with a solid lunge that was not to be denied.

The varsity being forced at last to kick, Bangs came out opposite him for that running scrimmage to cover a punt that is the final test of an end.

Stover, dropping a little behind, confident in his measure of the man, caught him with his shoulder on the start, throwing him off balance for a precious moment, and then followed him down the field, worrying him like a sheep-dog pursuing a rebellious member of his flock, and caught him at the last with a quick lunge at the knees that sent him sprawling out of the play. Up on his feet in a minute, Stover went racing after his fullback, in time to

give the impetus of his weight that sent him over his tackle, falling forward.

"How in blazes did that scrub end get back here?" shouted out Harden, a coach, a famous end himself. He came up the field with Bangs, grabbing him by the shoulder, gesticulating furiously, his fist flourishing, crying:

"Here, Dana, give us that play over again!"

A second time Bangs sought to elude Stover, goaded on by the taunts of Harden, who accompanied them. Quicker in speed and with a power of instinctive application of his strength, Stover hung to his man, putting him out of the play despite his frantic efforts.

Harden, furious, railed at him.

"What! You let a freshman put you out of the play? Where's your pride? In the name of Heaven do something! Why, they're laughing at you, Ben,— they're giving you the laugh!"

Bangs, senior society man, manager of the crew, took the driving and the leash without a protest, knowing though he did that the trouble was beyond him — that he was up against a better man.

Suddenly Harden turned on Stover, who, a little apart, was moving uneasily, feeling profoundly sorry for the tanning Bangs was receiving on his account.

"Look here, young fellow, you're not playing that right."

Stover was amazed.

"What's the first thing you've got to think about when you follow down your end?"

"Keep him out of the play," said Stover.

"Never!" Harden seized him by the jersey, attacking with his long expostulating forefinger, just as he had laid down the law to Bangs. "Never! That's grandstand playing, my boy; good for you, rotten for the team.

The one thing you've got to do first, last, and always, is to know where the ball is and what's happening to it. Understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now you didn't do that. You went down with your eyes on your man only, didn't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"You never looked at your back to see if he fumbled, did you?"

"No, sir."

"And if he had, where'd you have been? If he holds it all right, knock over your end, but if he fumbles you've got to beat every one to it and recover it. You're one of eleven men, not a newspaper phenomenon — get that in your head. You didn't know I was trying you out as well as Bangs. Now let it sink into you. Do you get it?"

"Yes, sir, thank you," said Stover, furious at himself, for if there was one thing that was instinctive in him it was this cardinal quality of following the ball and being in every play.

It was a day of the hardest, trying alike to the nerves of coaches and men, when the teams were driven without a rest, when tempers were strained to the snapping point, in the effort to instil not so much the details of the game as the inflaming spirit of combat.

It was dusk before the coaches called a halt to the practise and sent them, steaming and panting, aching in every joint, back to the gymnasium for a rub-down.

Climbing wearily into the car to sink gratefully into a seat, Dink suddenly, to his confusion, found himself by the side of Bangs.

"Hello," said the senior, looking up with a grin, "I hope every muscle in your body's aching."

"It certainly is," said Stover, relieved.

Bangs looked at him a long moment, shook his head, and said:

"I wish I could drop a ton of brick on you."

"Why?"

"I've plugged away for years, slaved like a nigger at this criminal game, thought I was going to get my chance at last, and now you come along."

"Oh, I say," said Stover in real confusion.

"Oh, I'll make you fight for it," said the other, with a snap of his jaws. "But, boy, there's one thing I liked. When that old rhinoceros of a Harden was putting the hooks into me, you never eased up for a second."

"I knew you'd feel that way."

"If you'd done differently I'd slaughtered you," said Bangs. "Well, good luck to you!"

He smiled, but back of the smile Stover saw the cruel cut of disappointment.

And this feeling was stronger in him than any feeling of elation as he returned to his rooms, after the late supper. He had never known anything like the fierceness of that first practise. It was not play with the zest he loved, it was a struggle of ambitions with all the heartache that lay underneath. He had gone out to play, and suddenly found himself in a school for character, enchained to the discipline of the Cæsars, where the test lay in stoicism and the victory was built on the broken hopes of a comrade.

For the first time, a little appalled, he felt the weight of the seriousness, the deadly seriousness of the American spirit, which seizes on everything that is competition and transforms it, with the savage fanaticism of its race, for success.

CHAPTER VII

AFTER a week of grueling practise, the first game of the season came like a holiday. Stover was called out after the first few minutes, replacing Bangs, and remained until the close. He played well, aided by several fortunate opportunities, earning at the last a pat on the back from Dana which sent him home rejoicing. The showing of the team was disappointing, even for that early season. The material was plainly lacking in the line, and at full-back the kicking was lamentably weak. The coaches went off with serious faces; throughout the college assembled on the stands was a spreading premonition of disaster.

Saturday night was privileged, with the long, grateful Sunday morning sleep ahead.

"Dink, ahoy!" shouted McNab's cheerful voice over the banister, as he entered the house.

"Hello, there!"

"How's the boy wonder, the only man-eating Dink in captivity?"

"Tired as the deuce."

"Fine. First rate," said McNab, skipping down. "Forget the past, think only of the bright furniture. We've got a block of tickets for Poli's Daring-Dazzling-Delightful Vaudeville to-night. You're elected. We'll end up with a game at Reynolds'. Seen the *Evening Register?*"

"No."

"My boy, you are famous," said McNab, brandishing

a paper. "I'm lovelier, but you get the space. Never mind, I'll be arrested soon — anything to get in the papers!"

While McNab's busy tongue ran on, Stover was gazing at the account of the game, where, among the secondary headlines, there stared out at him the caption:

STOVER, A FRESHMAN, PLAYS
SENSATIONAL GAME.

The thing was too incredible. He stood stupidly looking at it.

"How do you feel?" said McNab, taking his pulse professionally.

There was no answer Stover could give to that first throbbing sensation at seeing his name — his own name — in print. It left him confused, almost a little frightened.

"Why, Dink, you're modest," said the irrepressible McNab; and, throwing open the door, he shouted at the top of his voice: "I say, fellows, come down and see Dink blush."

A magnificent scrimmage, popularly known as a "rough house," ensued, in which McNab was properly chastised, though not a whit subdued.

McCarthy arrived late, with the freshman eleven, back from a close contest with a school team. They took a hurried supper, and went down a dozen strong, in jovial marching order.

The sensations of the theater were still new to Stover, nor had his fortunate eye seen under the make-up or his imagination gone below the laughter. To parade down the aisle, straight as a barber's pole, chin carefully balanced on the sharp edge of his collar, on the night of his

first day as end on the Yale varsity, delightfully conscious of his own startling importance, feeling as if he overtopped every one in the most public fashion, to be absolutely blushingly conscious that every one in the theater must, too, be grasping a copy of that night's *Evening Register,* that every glance had started at his arrival and was following in set admiration, was a memory he was never to forget. His shoulders thrown up a little, just a little in accentuation, as behooved an end with a reputation for tackling, he found his seat and, dropping down quickly to escape observation, buried himself in his program to appear modest before the burning concentration of attention which he was quite sure must now be focused on him.

"Dobbs and Benzigger, the fellows who smash the dishes — by George, that's great!" cried McNab, joyfully running over the program. "They're wonders — a perfect scream!"

"Any good dancing?" said Hungerford, and a dozen answers came:

"You bet there is!"

"Fanny Lamonte — a dream, Joe!"

"Daintiest thing you ever saw."

"Sweetest little ankles!"

"Who's this coming — the Six Templeton Sisters?"

"Don't know."

"Well, here they come."

"They've got to be pretty fine for me!"

Enthroned as lords of the drama, they pronounced their infallible judgments. Every joke was new, every vaudeville turn an occasion for a gale of applause. The appearance of the "Six Templetons" was the occasion of a violent discussion between the adherents of the blondes

and the admirers of the brunettes, led by the impressionable McNab.

"I'm all for the peach in the middle!"

"Ah, rats! She's got piano legs. Look at the fighting brunette at this end."

"Why, she's got a squint."

"Squint nothing; she's winking at me."

"Yes, she is!"

"Watch me get her eye!"

Stover, of course, preserved an attitude of necessary dignity, gently tolerant of the rakish sentimentalities of the younger members of the flock. Moreover, he was supremely aware that the sparkling eyes under the black curls (were they real?) were not looking at McNab, but intensely directed at his own person — all of which, as she could not have read the *Register,* was a tribute to his own personal and not public charms.

The lights, the stir of the audience, the boxes filled with the upper classmen, the gorgeous costumes, the sleepy pianist pounding out the accompaniments while accomplishing the marvelous feat of reading a newspaper, were all things to him of fascination. But his eye went not to the roguish professional glances, but lost itself somewhere above amid the ragged drops and borders. He was transported into the wonders of Dink-land, where one figure ran a hundred adventures, where a hundred cheers rose to volley forth one name, where a dozen games were passed in a second, triumphant, dazzling, filled with spectacular conflicts, blurred with frantic crowds of blue, ending always in surging black-hatted rushes that tossed him victoriously toward the stars!

"Let's cut out," said McNab's distinct voice. "There's nothing but xylophones and coons left."

"Come on over to Reynolds's."

"Start up the game."

Reluctantly, fallen to earth again, Stover rose and followed them out. In a moment they had passed through the fragrant casks and bottles that thronged the passage, saluting the statesmanly bulk of Hugh Reynolds, and found themselves in a back room, already floating in smoke. White, accusing lights of bracketed lamps picked out the gray features of a dozen men vociferously rolling forth a drinking chorus, while the magic arms of Buck Waters, his falcon's nose and little muzzle eyes, dominated the whole. A shout acclaimed them:

"Yea, fellows!"

"Shove in here!"

"Get into the game."

"Bartender, a little more of that brutalizing beer!"

"Cheese and pretzels!"

"Hello, Tough McCarthy!"

"Over here, Dopey McNab."

"Get into the orchestra."

"Good boy, Stover!"

"Congratulations!"

"Oh, Dink Stover, have we your eye?"

The last call, caught up by every voice, went swelling in volume, accompanied by a general uplifting of mugs and glasses. It was the traditional call to a health.

"I'd like to oblige," said Dink, a little embarrassed, "but I'm in training."

"That's all right — hand him a soft one."

For the first time he perceived that there was a perfect freedom in the choice of beverage. He bowed, drained his glass, and sat down.

"Oh, Dopey McNab, have we your eye?"

"You certainly have, boys, and I'm no one-eyed man

at that," said McNab, jovially disappearing down a mug, while the room in chorus trolled out:

"Drink the wine divine
As long as you can stand it.
Hand the bowl around
As long as you can hand it.
Drink your glass,
Drink your glass,
Dri-i-i-i-ink — he's drunk it down."

"Oh, Jim Hunter, have we your eye?"

Each new arrival in turn, called to his feet, rose and drained his glass to a hilarious accompaniment, while Stover, to his surprise, noted that fully a third of the crowd were ordering soft drinks.

"Oh, Dink Stover, here's to *you!*"

From across the table Tommy Bain, lifting his glass of ginger ale, smiled a gracious smile.

"Same to you, Tommy Bain."

The fellow who had addressed him was a leader among the Hotchkiss crowd, out for coxswain, already spoken of for one of the class managerships. He was a diminutive type, immaculately neat, black hair exactly parted and unflurried, well jacketed, turn-down collar embellished with a red-and-yellow four-in-hand, a rather large, bulbous nose, and thin eyes that were never quiet — shrewd, direct, inquisitive, always estimating. He was smiling again, raising his glass to some one else down the table, and the smile that passed easily over his lips had the quality of seeming to come from the heart.

McNab and Buck Waters, natural leaders of the revels, arms locked, were giving a muscular exhibition of joint conducting, while the room in chorus sang:

"Should fortune prove unkind,
Should fortune prove unfair,
A cure I have in mind
To drive away all care."

"By George!" said Hungerford, at his side, laughing, "it's good to be in the game at last, isn't it, Dink?"

"It certainly is."

"We've got a great crowd; it's going to be a great class."

"Who's Bain?" said Dink, under his breath.

"Bain — oh, he's a clever chap, probably be a class deacon. That's another good thing about this place: we can all get together and drink what we want."

"Chorus!" cried McNab and Waters, with a twin flourish of their arms.

"Chorus!" shouted Hungerford and Bain, raising their glasses in accompaniment.

"For to-night we will be merry
As the rosy wine we drink —
The rosy wine we drink!"

"Yea!"

"A little more close harmony!"

A great shout acclaimed the chorus and another song was started.

Hunter and Bain were opposite each other, surrounded as it were by adherents, each already aware of the other, measuring glances, serious, unrelaxing, never unbending, never departing a moment from the careful attitude of critical aloofness. In the midst of the rising hilarity and the rebellious joy of newly gained liberty, the two rival leaders sat singing, but not of the song, the same placid, maliciously superior smile floating over the perfectly con-

trolled lips of Bain, while in the anointed gaze of Hunter was a ponderous seriousness which at that age is ascribed to a predestined Napoleonic melancholy.

"Solo from Buck Waters!"

"Solo!"

"On the chair!"

"Yea, Buck Waters!"

Yielding to the outcry Waters was thrust upward.

"The cowboy orchestra!"

"Give us the cowboy orchestra!"

"The cowboy orchestra, ladies and gentlemen."

With a wave of his hand he organized the room into drums, bugles, and trombones, announcing:

"The orchestra will tune up and play this little tune,

> "'*Ta-de-dee-ra-ta-ra-ta-rata,*
> *Ta-de-dee-ra-ta-ra-ta-rata-ta!*'

"All ready? Lots of action there — a little more cyclonic from the trombones. Fine! Whenever I give the signal the orchestra will burst forth into that melodious refrain. I will now give an imitation of a professional announcer at Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and Congress of Rough Riders. Orchestra:

> "*Ta-de-dee-rata-rata-rata*
> *Ta-de-dee-rata-rata-rata-ta!*"

While Waters, with his great comical face shining above the gleeful crowd like a harvest moon rising from the lake, continued endlessly drawling out his nasal imitations, the crowd, for the first time welded together, rocked and shouted out the farcical chorus. When he had ended, Buck Waters sat down, enthroned forever afterward master of song and revels.

Bain began to cast estimating glances, calculating on the moment to leave. At the other end Waters was fairly smothered under the rush of delighted comrades, patting him on the back, acclaiming his rise to fame. The tables settled down into a sentimental refrain led by Stone's clear tenor.

Dink's glance, traveling down the table, was suddenly attracted by the figure of a young fellow with a certain defiant yet shy individuality in its pose.

"Who's the rather dark chap just beyond Dopey?" he asked Hungerford.

"Don't know; ask Schley."

"Brockhurst — Sidney Brockhurst," said Schley, not lowering his voice, "from Hill School. Trying for the *Lit.* Clever chap, they say, but a little long-haired."

Stover studied him, his curiosity awakened. Brockhurst, of all present, seemed the most solitary and the most self-conscious. He had a long head, high, thin cheeks, and a nervous little habit, when intent or conscious of being watched, of drawing his fingers over his lips. His head was thrown back a little proudly, but the eyes contradicted this attitude, with the acute shyness in them that clouded a certain keen imaginative scrutiny.

At this moment his eyes met Stover's. Dink, yielding to an instinct, raised his glass and smiled. Brockhurst hastily seized his mug in response, spilling a little of it and dropping his glance quickly. Once or twice, as if unpleasantly conscious of the examination, he turned uneasily.

"He looks rather interesting," said Stover thoughtfully.

"Think so?" said Schley. "Rather freaky to me."

Suddenly a shout went up:

"Come in!"

"Yea, Sheff!"

"Yea, Tom Kelly!"

The narrow doorway was suddenly alive with a boisterous, rollicking crowd of Sheff freshmen, led by Tom Kelly, a short, roly-poly, alert little fellow with a sharp pointing nose and a great half-moon of a mouth.

"Come in, Kelly!"

"Crowd in, fellows!"

"Oh, Tom, join us!"

"I will *not* come in," said Kelly, with a certain painful beery assumption of dignity. He balanced himself a moment, steadied by his neighbors; and then, to the delight of the room, began, with the utmost gravity, one of his inimitable imitations of the lords that sit enthroned in the faculty.

"I come, not to stultify myself in the fumes of liquor, but to do you good. Beer is brutalizing. With your kind permission, I will whistle you a few verses of a noble poem on same subject."

"Whistle, Tom?"

"The word was whistle," said Kelly sternly. Extending his arm for silence, he proceeded, with great intensity and concentrated facial expression, to whistle a sort of improvisation. Then, suddenly ceasing, he continued:

"And what does this beautiful, ennobling little thing teach us, written by a great mind, one of the greatest, greatest minds — what does it teach us?"

"Well, what does it teach?" said one or two voices, after Kelly had preserved a statuesque pose beyond the limits of their curiosity.

"Ask me," said Kelly, with dignity.

"Mr. Kelly," said McNab rising seriously, "what does this little gem of intellectuality, this as it were

psycho-therapeutical cirrhosis of a paleontological state, — you get my meaning, of course,— that is, from the point of view of modern introspective excavations, with due regard to whatever the sixth dimension, considered as such, may have of influence, and allowing that a certain amount of error is inherent in Spanish cooking if eggs are boiled in a chafing-dish — admitting all this, I ask you a simple question. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly," said Kelly, who had followed this serious harangue with strained attention. "And, moreover, I agree with you."

"You agree?" said McNab, feigning surprise.

"I do."

"Sir, you are a congenial soul. Shake hands."

But, in the act of stealing this sudden friendship, Kelly brought forth his hand, when it was perceived that he was tightly clutching a pool-ball, and, moreover, that his pockets were bulging like a sort of universal mumps with a dozen inexplicable companions. A shout went up:

"Why, he's swallowed a frame of pool-balls!"

"He certainly has."

"He's swiped them."

"He's wrecked a pool-room."

"How the deuce did he do it?"

"Why, Tom, where did you get 'em?"

"Testimonial — testimonial of affection," replied Kelly, "literally showered on me."

"Tom, you stole them."

"I did not steal them!"

"Tom, you stole them!"

"Tom, O Tom!"

Kelly, who had proceeded to empty his pockets for an exhibition, becoming abruptly offended at the universal

"'I COME NOT TO STULTIFY MYSELF IN THE FUMES OF LIQUOR, BUT TO DO YOU GOOD'"—*Page 89.*

shouted accusation, repocketed the pool-balls and departed, despite a storm of protest and entreaties, carrying with him McNab.

A number of the crowd were passing beyond control; others, inflexible, smiling, continued in their attitude of spectators, Brockhurst because he could not forget himself, Hunter and Bain because they would not.

"Time for us to be cutting out," said Hunter, with a glance at his watch. "What about it, Stover?"

Dink was annoyed that he had not made the move himself. McCarthy, Hungerford, and one or two of the freshman candidates arose. A shout went up from the noisy end of the table.

"Here! no quitting!"

"Cowards!"

"Come back!"

"Shut up; it's the football crowd!"

"Oh, football, eh?"

"Right."

"Splendid!"

Stover with a serious face, shook hands with Troutman, a red-haired fellow with sharp advancing features who said impressively:

"Mr. Stover, I wish to express for my friends the gratification, the extreme gratification, the extreme moral gratification we feel at seeing a football — a football candidate showing such moral courage — moral — it's wonderful — it moves me. Mr. Stover, I'd like to shake your hand."

Dink laughed and escaped, seeing, in a last glance at the vaporous fitful room, Troutman solemnly giving his hand to Waters, whom he was congratulating on his extreme moral courage in remaining.

Tommy Bain, in the confusion, slipped out unnoticed

and joined them. The last swollen burst of the song was shut from them. They went back toward the campus in twos and threes, over the quiet, moist pavement, past the noisy windows of Mory's — where no freshmen need apply — to the Common, where suddenly, in the moonlit shadow of a great elm, they found a vociferous group with Tom Kelly and McNab in the midst.

At this moment something fell from the skies within perilous distance.

"What the deuce is that?" said Hungerford, jumping back.

"Why, it's a pool-ball," said Stone, stooping down.

Another fell, just missing Hunter's shoulders.

"It's Kelly," said Bain, "and he's firing at us."

With a rush they joined the group, to find Kelly, determined and enthusiastic, solemnly discharging his ammunition at the great bulbous moon that was set lumberingly above them. They joined the group that surrounded him, expostulating, sober or fuddled:

"Don't be an ass, Tom."

"The cops are coming."

"I say, come on home."

"How many more has he got?"

"Get him home, you fellows."

"Stop him."

Meanwhile, abetted by the admiring, delighted McNab, Tom Kelly, taking the most solicitous aim, was continuing his serious efforts to hit the moon with the pool-balls which he had procured no one knew how.

"I say, McNab," said Stover, drawing him aside, "better get him to stop now. Too many cops around. Use your influence — he'll listen to you."

McNab's sense of responsibility having thus become

violently agitated, he wabbled up to the laboring Kelly, and the following historic dialogue took place:

"I say, Tom, old fellow, you know me, don't you? You know I'm a good sort, don't you — one of the finest?"

"I know you, Dopey McNab; I'm proud to know you."

"I want to speak a word with you seriously."

"What?"

"Seriously."

"Say on."

"Now, seriously, Tom, do you think you can hit it?"

"Don't know; going to try's much as in me. Biff!"

"Hold up," said McNab, staying his hand. "Tom, I'm going to appeal to you as man to man."

"Appeal."

"You understand — as man to man."

"Sure."

"You're a man; I'm a man."

"The finest."

"Now as man to man, I'm going to tell you the truth."

"The whole truth?"

"Solemn truth."

"Tell on."

"You can't hit it."

"Why not?"

"Tom, it's too — too far away!"

The two shook hands solemnly and impressively.

"Can't hit it — too far away," said Kelly, with the pool-ball clutched tight. "Too far away, eh?"

"My dear Tom," said McNab, tearfully breaking the news, "it's too far — entirely too far away. You can't reach it, Tom; believe me, as man to man — you can't, you can never, never hit it."

"I know I can't, Dopey," said Kelly, in an equally mournful tone, "I know all that. All that you say is true. But, Dopey, suppose I *should* hit it, suppose I *should*, just think — think — how my name would go reeling and rocking down to fushure generations! Biff!"

They left McNab overcome by the impressiveness of this argument, busily gathering up the pool-balls, resolved that every opportunity should be given Kelly to rank among the immortals.

Stover would have liked to stay. For the moment, almost a rebellion swept over him at the drudgery to which he had condemned himself in his ambition. He saw again the low table, through the smoke, and Buck Waters's jovial pagan face leading the crowd in lazy, care-free abandon. He felt that liberty, that zest of life, that wild spirit of youth for which he yearned and of which he had been defrauded by Le Baron's hand, that hand which had ruthlessly torn away the veil. Something leaped up within him — a longing to break the harness, to jump the gate and go heels in the air, cavorting across unfenced meadows. He rebelled against the way that had been marked out for him. He rebelled against the self-imposed discipline, and, most of all, he rebelled against the hundred eyes under whose inspection he must now inevitably walk.

Ahead of them to the left, across by Osborne, came the gay, defiant singing of a group of upper classmen returning to the campus:

"For it's always fair weather
When good fellows stand together,
With a stein on the table
And a good song ringing clear."

The echo came to him with a certain grim mockery. There would be very little of that for him. It was to be four years, not of pleasure and inclination, but of seriousness and restraint, if he continued in his decision. For a moment the pagan in him prevailed, and he doubted. Then they passed across High Street, and at their sides the dead shadow of the society tomb suddenly intruded upon them. Which of the group at the end of the long three years would be of the chosen? Which would lead?

"Well, fellows, we go this way," said Bain's methodical voice. "Drop around at the rooms soon. Good night."

Stover, Hunter, and Bain for the moment found themselves together, each striving for the same social honor, each conscious that, whatever an established system might bring to them, with its enforced comradeship, among them would always be the underlying contending spirit of variant ambitions.

Stover felt it keenly, almost with a sharp antagonism that drove from him finally the slumbering rebellion he had felt all that night — the tugging at the bridle of consciousness which had been imposed upon him. This was a bigger thing, a thing that wakened in him the great instincts of combat. He would be a leader among leaders. He would succeed as success was reckoned.

He gave a little laugh and held out his hand to Hunter.

"Good night, Jim," he said.

"Why — good night," said Hunter, surprised at the laugh and the unnecessary handshake.

But the hand had been offered in challenge, and the laugh marked the final deliberate acceptance of all that Le Baron had logically exposed to him.

"I'll play the game, and I'll play it better than they will," he said, setting his lips. "I've got my eyes open, and I'm not going to throw away a single chance. We'll see who'll lead!"

CHAPTER VIII

THE intensity and seriousness of the football season abetted Stover in his new attitude of Napoleonic seclusion by leaving him little time for the lighter side of college pleasures. Every hour was taken up with the effort of mastering his lessons, which he then regarded, in common with the majority of his class, as a laborious task, a sort of necessary evil, the price to be paid for the privilege of passing four years in pleasant places with congenial companions.

After supper he returned immediately to his rooms, where presently a succession of visiting sophomores, members of the society campaign committees, took up the first hours. These inquisitorial delegations, formal, stiff, and conducted on a basis of superior investigation, embarrassed him at first. But this feeling soon wore off with the consciousness that he was a subject of dispute; and, secure in the opportunity that would come to him with the opening of the winter-term period of elections, his interest was directed only to the probable selection among his classmates.

By the middle of October the situation at Yale field had become critical. The earlier games had demonstrated what had been foreseen — the weakness and inexperience of the raw material in hand. Serious errors in policy were committed by Captain Dana, who, in the effort to find some combination which would bolster up the weak backfield, began a constant shifting of the positions in order to experiment with heavier men behind

the line. A succession of minor injuries arrived to further the disorganization. The nervousness of the captain communicated itself to the team, harassed and driven in the effort for accomplishment. That there was serious opposition among the coaches to these new groping policies every man saw plainly; yet, to Stover's amazement, the knowledge remained within the team, impregnated with the spirit of loyalty and discipline.

After three weeks of brilliancy at his natural position of end, buoyed up by the zest of confidence and success, he was abruptly called to one side.

"Stover, you've played behind the line, haven't you?" said Dana.

"A couple of games at school, sir," he answered hastily, "just as a makeshift."

"I'm going to try you at fullback."

"At fullback?"

"Get into it and see if you can make good."

"Yes, sir."

He went without spirit, sure of the impossibility of the thing, feeling only the humiliation and failure that all at once flung itself like a storm-cloud across his ambition. A coach took charge of him, running over with him the elementary principles of blocking and plunging.

When he lined up, it was with half of the coaching force at his back.

"Come on, Stover; get into it!"

"Wake up!"

"Get your head down!"

"Keep a-going!"

"Ram into it!"

"Knock that man over!"

"Knock him *over!*"

He went into the line blindly, frantically, feeling for

the first time that last exhausting, lunging expenditure of strength that is called forth with the effort to fall forward when tackled. Nothing he did satisfied. It was a constant storm of criticism, behind his back, in his ears, shrieked to his face:

"Keep your feet — oh, keep your feet!"

"Smash open that line!"

"Rip open that line!"

"Hit it — hit it!"

"Hard — harder!"

"Go on — don't stop!"

A dozen times he flung his meager weight against the ponderous bodies of the center men, crushed by the impact in front, smothered by the surging support of his own line behind, helpless in the grinding contention, turned and twisted, going down in a heap amid the shock of bodies, thinking always:

"Well, the darn fools will find out just about how much use I am here!"

When the practise ended, at last, Dana called on Tompkins.

"Joe, take Stover and give him a line on the punting, will you?"

"I say, he's been worked pretty hard," said the coach with a glance.

"How about it?" said Dana quickly.

"All right," said Stover, lying gloriously. At that moment, aching in every joint, he would have given everything to have spoken his mind. Instead he brought forth a smile distinguished for its eagerness, and said, "I'd like to get right at it, sir."

"Fullback's the big problem," said Tompkins, as they started across the field. "Bangs can fill in at end, but we've got to get a fullback that can catch punts, and with

nerve enough to get off his kicks in the face of that Princeton line."

"I'll do my best, sir," said Stover, with a sinking feeling.

For twenty minutes, against the rebellion of his body, he went through a rigorous lesson, improving a little in the length of his punts, and succeeding fairly well in holding the ball, which came spinning end over end to him from the region of the clouds.

"That'll do," said Tompkins, at last.

"That's all?" said Stover stoically, picking up his sweater.

"That's all." Tompkins, watching him for a moment, said suddenly: "Stover, I don't know whether Dana'll keep you at full or not, but I guess you'll have to get ready to fill in. Come over to the gym lot every morning for about half an hour, and we'll see if we can't work up those punts."

"Yes, sir."

They walked out together.

"Stover, look here," said Tompkins abruptly, "I'm going to speak straight to you, because I think you'll keep your mouth shut. We're in a desperate condition here, and you know it. There's only one man in charge at Yale, now and always, and that's the captain. That's our system, and we stand or fall by it; and in order that we can follow him four times out of five to victory, we've got sometimes to shut our eyes and follow him down to defeat. Do you get me?"

"I think I do."

"No matter what happens, no criticism of the captain — no talking outside. You may think he's wrong, you may know he's wrong, but you've got to grin and bear it. That's all. Remember it — a close mouth!"

But it required all Stover's newly learned stoicism to maintain this attitude in the weeks that arrived. After a week he was suddenly returned to his old position, and as suddenly redrafted to fullback when another game had displayed the inadequacy of the regular. From a position where he was familiar with all the craft of the game, Stover suddenly found himself a novice whom a handful of coaches sought desperately to develop by dint of hammering and driving. His name no longer figured in the newspaper accounts as the find of the season, but as Stover the weak spot on the eleven. It was a rude discipline, and more than once he was on the point of crying out at what seemed to him the useless sacrifice. But he held his tongue as he saw others, seniors, put to the same test and giving obedience without a word of criticism for the captain, who, as every one realized, face to face with a hopeless outcome, was gradually going to pieces.

Meanwhile Dopey McNab was just as zealously concerned in the pursuit of his classic ideal, which, however, was imagined more along the lines of such historic scholars as Verdant Green, Harry Foker, and certain heroes of his favorite author, Charles Lever.

The annoyance of recitations by an economical imagination he converted into periods of repose and refreshing slumber behind the broad back of McMasters, who, for a certain fixed portion of tobacco a week, agreed to act as a wall in moments of calm and to awake him with a kick on the shins when the summons to refuse to recite arrived.

Having discovered Buck Waters as a companionable soul, congenially inclined to the pagan view of life, it was not long before the two discovered the third completing genius in the person of Tom Kelly, who, though a mem-

ber of the Sheff freshman class, immediately agreed not to let either time, place, or conflicting recitations stand in the way of that superior mental education which must result from the friction of three such active imaginations.

The triumvirate was established on a firm foundation on the day after Kelly's ambitious but unsuccessful attempt to hit the moon with a pool-ball, and immediately began a series of practical jokes and larks which threatened to terminate abruptly the partnership or remove it bodily to an unimaginative outer world.

McNab, like most gentlemen of determined leisure, worked indefatigably every minute of the day. Having slept through chapel and first recitation, with an occasional interruption to rise and say with great dignity, "Not prepared," he would suddenly, about ten o'clock in the morning, awake with a start, and drifting into Stover's room plaster his nose to the window and restlessly ask himself what mischief he could invent for the day.

After a moment of dissatisfied introspection, he would say fretfully:

"I say, Dink?"

"Hello!"

"Studying?"

"Yes."

"Almost finished?"

"No."

"What are you doing, McCarthy?"

"Boning out an infernal problem in spherical geometry."

"I gave that up."

"Oh, you did!"

"Sure, it's too hard — what's the use of wasting time over it, then? What do you say to a game of pool?"

"Get out!"

"Let's go for a row up on Lake Whitney."

"Shut up!"

"Come over to Sheffield and get up a game of poker with Tom Kelly."

At this juncture, Stover and McCarthy rising in wrath, McNab would beat a hurried retreat, dodging whatever came sailing after him. Much aggrieved, he would go down the hall, trying the different doors, which had been locked against his approach.

About this time Buck Waters, moved by similar impulses, would appear and the two would camp down on the top step and practise duets, until a furious uprising in the house would drive them ignominiously on to the street.

Left to their own resources, they would wander aimlessly about the city, inventing a hundred methods to accomplish the most difficult of all feats, killing time.

On one particular morning in early November, McNab and Buck Waters, being refused admission to three houses on York Street, and the affront being aggravated by jeers and epithets of the coarsest kind, went arm in arm on mischief bent.

"I say, what let's do?" said McNab disconsolately.

"We must do something new," said Buck Waters.

"We certainly must."

"Well, let's try the old clothes gag," said McNab; "that always amuses a little."

Reaching the thoroughfare of Chapel Street, McNab stationed himself at the corner while Waters proceeded to a point about half-way down the block.

Assuming a lounging position against a lamp-post, McNab waited until chance delivered up to him a superhumanly dignified citizen in top hat and boutonnière, moving through the crowd with an air of solid importance.

Darting out, he approached with the sweep of an eagle, saying in a hoarse whisper:

"Old clothes, any old clothes, sir?"

His victim, frowning, accelerated his pace.

"Buy your old clothes, sir, buy 'em now."

Several onlookers stopped and looked. The gentleman, who had not turned to see who was addressing him, said hurriedly in an undertone:

"No, no, nothing to-day."

"Buy 'em to-morrow — pay good price," said McNab peevishly.

"No, no, nothing to sell."

"Call around at the house — give good prices."

"Nothing to sell, nothing, I tell you!"

"Buy what you got on," said McNab at the psychological moment, "give you five dollars or toss you ten or nothinks!"

"Be off!" said the now thoroughly infuriated victim, turning and brandishing his cane. "I'll have you arrested."

McNab, having accomplished his preliminary rôle, retreated to a safe distance, exclaiming:

"Toss you ten dollars or nothinks!"

The now supremely self-conscious and furious gentleman, having rid himself of McNab, immediately found himself in the hands of Buck Waters, who pursued him for the remainder of the block, with a mild obsequious persistency that would not be shaken off. By this time the occupants of the shop windows and the loiterers,

perceiving the game, were in roars of laughter, which made the passage of the second and third victims a procession of hilarious triumph for McNab and Waters.

Tiring of this, they locked arms again and, taking by hazard a side street, continued their quest for adventure.

"Mornings are a dreadful bore," said McNab, pulling down his hat.

"They certainly are."

"Who was the old duck we tackled first?"

"Don't know — familiar whiskers."

"Seemed to me I've seen him somewhere."

"Say, look at the ki-yi."

"It's a Shetland poodle."

"It's a pen-wiper."

Directly in front of them a shaggy French poodle, bearing indeed a certain resemblance to both a Shetland pony and a discarded pen-wiper, was gleefully engaged in the process of shaking to pieces a rubber which it had stolen.

"If it sees itself in a mirror it will die of mortification," said Buck Waters.

"And yet, Buck, he's happier than we are," said McNab, who had been unjustifiably forced to flunk twice in one morning's recitation.

"I say, Dopey," said Waters in alarm, "quit that!"

"I will."

"Look at the fireworks," said Waters, stopping suddenly at a window, "pin-wheels, rockets, Roman candles."

"What are they doing there this time of the year?" said McNab angrily.

"Election parade, perhaps."

"That's an idea to work on, Buck."

"It certainly is."

"We must tell Tom Kelly about that."

"We will."

"Why, there's that ridiculous ki-yi again!"

"He seems to like us."

"I'm not complimented."

At this moment, with the poodle sporting the rubber about fifteen feet ahead of them, they beheld an Italian barber lolling in the doorway of his shop, as profoundly bored by himself as they affected to be in conjunction.

"Fine dog," said the barber with a critical glance.

"Sure," said McNab, halting at once.

The poodle, for whatever reason, likewise halted and looked around.

"Looka better, cutta da hair."

"You're right there, Columbus," assented Buck Waters. "His fur coat looks as though it came from a fire sale."

"He ought to be trim up nice, good style."

"Right, very, very right!"

"Give him nice collar, nice tuft on da tail, nice tuft on da feet."

"Right the second time!"

"I clip him up, eh?" said the barber hopefully.

"Why not?" said McNab, looking into the depth of Buck Waters's eyes.

"Why not, Beecher?" said Waters, giving him the name of the President of the College Y. M. C. A.

"I think it an excellent suggestion, Jonathan Edwards," said McNab instantly.

With considerable strategic coaxing, the dog was enticed into the shop, where to their surprise he became immediately docile.

"You see he lika da clip," said the barber enthusiastically, preparing a table.

"He's a very intelligent dog," said McNab.

"You've done much of this, Columbus?" said Waters with a business-like air.

"Sure. Ten, twenta dog a day, down in da city."

"Edwards, we shall learn something."

The dog was induced to come on the table, and Waters delegated to hold him in position.

"Something pretty slick now, Christopher," said McNab, taking the attitude a connoisseur should take. "Explain the fine points to us, as you go along."

"Sure."

"I like the way he handles the scissors, Beecher — strong, powerful stroke."

"He's got a good batting eye, too, Edwards."

"My, what a nice clean boulevard!"

"Just see the hair fly."

"It'll certainly improve the tail."

"Clip a little anchor in the middle of the back."

"Did you see that?"

"I did."

"He's a wonder."

"He is."

"Columbus, a little more off here — oh, just a trifle!"

"First rate; shave up the nose and part the whiskers!"

"Look at the legs, with the dinky pantalets — aren't they dreams?"

"I love the tail best."

"Why, Columbus is an artist. Never saw any one like him."

"Would you know the dog?"

"Why, mother wouldn't know him," said McNab solemnly.

"All in forty-three minutes, too."

"It's beautifully done, beautifully."

"Exquisite!"

The barber, perspiring with his ambitious efforts, withdrew for a final inspection, clipped a little on the top and to the side, and signified by a nod that art could go no further.

"Pretta fine, eh?"

"Mr. Columbus, permit me," said Waters, shaking hands.

McNab gravely followed suit. The dog, released, gave a howl and began circling madly about the room.

"Open the door," shouted McNab. "See how happy he is!"

The three stationed themselves thoughtfully on the doorstep, watching the liberated poodle disappear down the street in frantic spirals, loops and figure-eights.

"He lika da feel," said the barber, pleased.

"Oh, he's much improved," said Waters, edging a little away.

"He fine lookin' a dog!"

"He'll certainly surprise the girls and mother," said McNab, shifting his feet. "Well, Garibaldi, ta-ta!"

"Hold up," said the barber, "one plunk."

"One dollar, Raphael?" said Buck Waters in innocent surprise. "What for, oh, what for?"

"One plunk, clippa da dog."

"Yes, but Garibaldi," said McNab gently, "that wasn't *our* dog."

"Shall we run for it?" said Waters, as they went hurriedly up the block.

"Wait until Garibaldi gives chase — we must be dignified," said McNab, with an eye to the rear.

"Dagos have no sense of humor. Here he comes with a razor — scud for it!"

They dashed madly for the corner, doubled a couple

of times, joined by the rejuvenated friendly poodle, and suddenly, wheeling around a corner, ran straight into the dean, who as fate would have it, was accompanied by the very dignified citizen who had been the first victim of their old clothes act and upon whom the frantic poodle, with canine expressions of relief and delight, immediately cast himself.

"Buck," said McNab, half an hour later, as they went limply back, "Napoleon would have whipped the British to an omelet at Waterloo if he'd known about that sunken road."

"We are but mortals."

"How the deuce were we to know the pup belonged to Professor Borgle, the eminent rootitologist?"

"Well, we paid the dago, didn't we?"

"That was outrageous."

"I say, Dopey, what'll you do if they fire us?"

"Don't joke on such subjects."

"Dopey," said Waters solemnly, "while the dean has the case under consideration, just to aid his deliberations, I think we had better — well, study a little."

"I suppose we must flirt with the text-books," said McNab, "but let's do it together, so no one'll suspect."

CHAPTER IX

THE last week of the football season broke over them before Stover could realize that the final test was almost at hand. The full weight of the responsibility that was on him oppressed him day and night. He forgot what he had been at end; he remembered only his present inadequacy. It had been definitely decided to keep him at fullback, for three things were imperative in the weak backfield: some one who could catch punts, with nerve enough to get off his kicks quickly in the face of a stronger line, and above all some one on the last defense who would never miss the tackle that meant a touchdown.

In the last week a great change took place in the sentiment of the university — the hoping against hope that often arrives with the intensity of combat. At this time Harvard and Yale were still reluctantly estranged, due to a purely hypothetical question as to which side had begun a certain historic slaughter, and the big game of the season was with Princeton, which, under the leadership of Garry Cockerell, Dink's first captain at Lawrenceville, had established a record of unusual power and brilliancy.

Up to Monday of the last week, the opinion around the campus was unanimous that the day of defeat had arrived; but, with the opening of the week and the flocking in of the old players, a new spirit was noticeable, and (among the freshmen) a tentative loosening of the purse-strings on news of extra-insulting challenges from the South.

At the practise, the season's marked division among the coaches was forgotten, and the field was alive with frantic assistants. The scrimmage between the varsity and the scrub took on a savageness that was sometimes difficult to control. The team, facing the impossible, with eagerness to respond, had clearly overworked itself. Stover himself weighed a bare one hundred and forty, an unspeakable depravity which he carefully concealed.

Still, the team began to feel a new impulse and a new unity, inspired by the confidence of the returned heroes. The grim silence of the past began to be broken by hopeful comments.

"By George, I believe there's something in those boys."

"We've come up smiling before."

"We may do it again."

"Shouldn't be surprised if they gave those Princeton Tigers the fight of their lives."

"Oh, they'll fight it out all right."

One or two trick plays were perpetrated behind closed gates, and a thorough drill in a new method of breaking up the Princeton formation for a kick, under the instruction of returning scouts. The team itself began to question and wonder.

"That fellow Rivers certainly has stiffened us up in the center of the line," said Regan, between plays, in one of his rare moments of loquacity. "I've learned more in three days than in the whole darn season."

"You've got to hold for my kicks," said Stover, submitting to the sponge which Clancy, the trainer, was daubing over his face.

"We'll hold."

"What do you really think, Tom?" said Stover as they

stood a little apart, waiting for the scrimmage to be resumed. "Do you think there's a chance?"

"I'm not thinking," said Regan, in his direct way. "Haven't any business to think. But we're getting together, there's no doubt of that. If we can't win, why, we'll lose as we ought to, and that's something."

Others were not so unruffled as Regan. The last days brought out all the divergent ways in which fierce, combative natures approach a crisis. Dana, the captain, was plainly on the edge of his self-control, his forehead drawn in a constant frown, his glance shooting nervously back and forth, speaking to no one except in the routine of the day. Dudley, at the other half, had adopted the same attitude. De Soto at quarter, on the contrary, radiated a fierce joy, joking and laughing, his nervous little voice piping out:

"A little more murder, fellows! Send them back on stretchers. That's the stuff. What the deuce is the matter, Bill, do you want to live forever? Use your hands, use your feet, use your teeth, anything! Whoop her up!"

Others in the line were more stolid, yet each in his way contributing to the nervous electricity that sent the team tirelessly, frantically, like mad dervishes, into the breach, while behind them, at their sides, everywhere, the coaches goaded them on.

"Oh, get together!"

"Shove the man in front of you!"

"Get your shoulder into it!"

"Fight for that last inch there!"

"Knock him off his feet!"

"Put your man out o' the play!"

"Break him up!"

No one paid any attention to the scrubs, fighting

desperately with the same loyalty against the odds of weight and organization, without hope of distinction, giving every last ounce of their strength in futile, frantic effort, rejoicing when flung aside and crushed under the victorious rush of the varsity, who alone counted.

Against the scrubs Stover felt a sort of rage. Time after time he went crashing into the line, seeing the blurred faces of his own comrades with an instinctive hatred, striking them with his shoulder, hurling them from the path of attack with a wild, uncontrollable fury at their resistance, almost unable to keep his temper in leash. The first feeling of sympathy he had felt so acutely for those who bore all the brunt of the punishment, unrewarded, was gone. He no longer felt any pity, but a brutal joy at the incessant smarting, grinding shock of the attack of which he was part and the touch of prostrate bodies under his rushing feet.

Thursday and Friday the practise was lightened for all except for the backs. For an hour he was kept at his punting in the open and behind the lines, while the scrubs, reënforced by every available veteran, swarmed through the line, seeking to block his kicks.

To one side a little knot of coaches watched the result with critical anxiety, following the length of the punts in grim silence.

Tompkins, behind him, from time to time, spoke quietly, knowing that his was a nature to be restrained rather than goaded on.

"Watch your opposing backs, Stover. Keep your punts low and away from them so as to gain as much on the ground as you can. That's it! Here, you center men, you've got to hold longer than that! You're hurrying the kick too much. Get it off clean, Stover. Not so good. Remember what I say about placing your

punt. You're going to be out-kicked fifteen yards; make up for it in brain work. All right, Dana?"

"That'll do," said Dana, after a moment's hesitation.

"All over?" said Dink, dazed.

"All over!"

The scrubs, with a yell, broke up, cheering the varsity, and being cheered in turn. Stover, with a sinking, realized that the week of preparation had gone and that as he was he must come up to the final test — the final test before the thousands that would blacken the arena on the morrow.

The squad went rather silently, each oppressed by the same thought.

"We'll go out to the country club for the night," said Tompkins's shrill voice. "Get your valises ready. And now stop talking football until we tell you. Go out on the trot now!"

From the gymnasium he went back to the house. As he came up the hall he heard a hum of voices from his room.

"Dink's got the nerve, but what the deuce can he do against that Princeton line? Do you know how much he weighs? One hundred and fifty."

Stover listened, smiled grimly. If they only knew his real weight!

"Do you think he'll last it through?"

"What, Dink?" said McCarthy's loyal voice. "You bet he'll last!"

"Blamed shame he isn't at end!"

"By ginger! he'd make the All-American if he was."

"Yes, and now every one will jump on him for being a rotten fullback."

"Dana be hanged!"

Stover went back to the stairs and returned noisily

At his entrance the crowd sprang up instinctively. He felt the sudden focus of anxious, critical glances.

"Hello, fellows," he said gruffly. "Tough, help me to stow a few duds in my valise."

"Sure I will!"

Two or three hurried to help McCarthy, in grotesque, unconsciously humorous eagerness; others patted him on the back with exaggerated good spirits.

"Dink, you look fine!"

"All to the good."

"Right on edge."

"Dink, we're all rooting for you."

"Every one of us."

"You'll tear 'em up."

"We're betting on you, old gazebo!"

"Thanks!"

He took the bag which McCarthy thrust upon him. Each solemnly shook his hand, thrilling at the touch, and Hungerford said:

"Whatever happens, old boy, we're going to be proud of you."

Stover stopped a moment, curiously moved, and obeying an instinct, said brusquely:

"Yes, I'll take care of that."

Then he went hurriedly out.

That night, after supper — a meal full of nervous laughter and assumed spirits — two or three of the older coaches came in, and their spirit of hopefulness somehow communicated itself to the team. Other Yale elevens had risen at the last moment and snatched a victory — why not theirs? It lay with them, and during the week they certainly had forged ahead. Dink felt the infection and became almost convinced. Then Tompkins, moving around as the spirit of confidence, signaled him.

"Come out here; I want a little pow-wow with you."

They left the others and went out on the dim lawns with the lighted club-house at their backs, and Tompkins, drawing his arm through Stover's, began to speak:

"Dink, we're in for a licking."

"Oh, I say!" said Stover, overwhelmed. "But we have come on; we've come fast."

"Stover, that's a great Princeton team," said Tompkins quietly, "and we're a weak Yale one. We're going to get well licked. Now, boy, I'm telling you this because I think you're the stuff to stand it; because you'll play better for knowing what's up to you."

"I see."

"It's going to depend a whole lot on you — how you hold up your end — how badly we're licked."

"I know I'm the weak spot," said Stover, biting his lips.

"You're a darn good player," said Tompkins, "and you're going to leave a great name for yourself; but this year you've had to be sacrificed. You've been put where you are because you've got nerve and a head. Now this is what I want from you. Know what you're up against and make your brain control that nerve — understand?"

"Yes, I do."

"You've got to do the kicking in the second half as well as in the first. You've got to keep your strength and not break it against a wall. You won't be called on for much rushing in the first half; you'll get a chance later. The line may go to pieces, the secondary defense may go to pieces; but, boy, if *you* go to pieces, we'll be beaten thirty to nothing."

"As bad as that!"

"Every bit."

"That's awful — a Yale team." He drew a long breath and then said: "What do you want me to do?"

"I want you to get off every punt without having it blocked; and that's a good deal, with what you're up against."

"Yes, sir."

"And hold on to every punt that comes to you — no fumbling."

"No fumbling — yes, sir."

"And kick as you've never kicked before — every kick better as you go on. Put your whole soul into it."

"I will."

"You won't miss a tackle — I know that; but you'll have some pretty rum ones to make, and when you tackle, make them remember it."

"Yes, sir."

"But, Stover, above all, hold steadfast. Keep cool and remember the game's a long one. Boy, you don't know what it'll mean for some of us old fellows to see Yale go down, but out of it all we want to remember something that'll make us proud of you." He stopped, controlled the emotion that was in his voice, and said a little anxiously: "I tell you this because a first game is a terrible thing, and I didn't want you to be caught in a panic when you found what you were up against. And I tell you, Stover, because you're the sort of fighting stuff that'll fight harder when you know all there is to it is the fighting. Am I right?"

"I hope so, sir."

"And now, do a more difficult thing. Get right hold of yourself. Put everything out of your mind; go to bed and sleep."

This last injunction, though he tried his best to obey it, was beyond Stover's power. He passed the night in fitful

flashes of sleep. At times he awoke, full of a fever of eagerness from a dream of success. Then he would lie staring, it seemed for hours, at the thin path across the ceiling made by a street lamp, feeling all at once a weakness in the pit of his stomach, a physical horror of what the day would bring forth. The words of the coach framed themselves in a sort of rhythmic chant which went endlessly knocking through his brain:

"Catch every punt — get off every kick — make every tackle."

In the morning it was the same refrain, which never left him. He rose tired, with a limpness in every muscle, his head heavy as if bound across with biting bonds. He stood stupidly holding his wash-pitcher, looking out of the window, saying:

"Good heavens! it's only a few hours off now."

Then he began feebly to wash, repeating:

"Get off every kick — every kick."

Breakfast passed like a nightmare. He put something tasteless into his mouth, his jaws moved, but that was all. The brisk walk to chapel restored him somewhat, and the consciousness of holding himself before the gaze of the crowd. After first recitation, Regan joined him, and together they went across the campus, no longer the campus of the University, but beginning to swarm with strangers, and strange colors amid the blue.

"How are you feeling?" said Regan in a fatherly sort of way, as they went through Phelps and out on to the Common.

"Tom, my shoes stick to the ground, my knees are made of paper, and I'm hollow from one end to the other."

"Fine!"

"Oh, *is* it?"

"You'll be a bundle of fire on the field."

"Let's not walk too far. We want to keep fresh," said Stover, feeling indeed as though every step was draining his energy.

"Rats! let's saunter down Chapel Street and see the crowds come in."

"You old rhinoceros, have you any nerves?"

"Lots, but they're a different sort. By George, isn't it a wonderful sight?"

Side by side with Regan, a certain shame steadied Stover. They went silently through the surging, arriving multitude, all intoxicated with the joy and zest of the great game. In and out, newsboys howling papers with headlines and pictures of the team thrust their wares before their eyes, while a pestiferous swarm of strange pedlers shrieked:

"Get your colors here!"

"Get your winnin' color."

Suddenly Stover saw a headline — his name and the caption:

STOVER THE WEAK SPOT

"Let's get a paper," he said, nervously drawn to it.

"No you don't," said Regan, who had seen it. "Come on, now, get out of here, some one might walk on your foot or stick a hatpin in your eye."

"What time is it?"

"Time to be getting back."

"Tom, do you know how much I weigh?" said Stover irrelevantly.

"What the deuce?"

"I weigh one hundred and forty-one pounds," said Stover solemnly, as though imparting a State secret.

"Go on, be loony if you want," said Regan. "I've seen

bruisers before a fight act like high school girls. If you've got something on your mind, why talk it out, it'll do you good."

"It's awful — it's awful," said Stover, shaking his head.

"What's awful?"

"It's awful to think I'm the weak spot, that if they only had a decent fullback there would be a chance. I've no right there — every one knows it, and every one's groaning about it."

"Go on."

"That's all," said Stover, a little angry.

"Well, then come on, I'm getting hungry."

"Hungry! Tom, I'd like to knock the spots out of you," said Dink, laughing despite himself.

"Dink, old bantam," said Regan, resting his huge paw on Stover's shoulder in rough affection, "you're all right. I say so and I know it. Now shut up and come on."

CHAPTER X

ALMOST before he knew it Stover was in the car and the wheels were moving at last irresistibly toward the field. There was no longer any pretense in those last awful moments that had in them all the concentrated hopes and fears of the weeks that had rushed away. The faces of his own team-mates were only gray faces without identity. He saw some one's lips moving incessantly, but he did not remember whose they were. Opposite him, another man was bending over, his head hidden in his hands. Some one else at his side was nervously locking and unlocking his fingers, breathing short, hard breaths. He remembered only the stillness of it all, the forgetfulness of others, the set stares, and Charlie de Soto fidgeting on the seat and nervously humming something irrelevant.

Caught up in this unreasoning intensity of a young nation, filled, too, with this exaggerated passion of combat, Stover leaned back limply. Outside, the street was choked with hilarious parties packed in rushing carriages, blue or orange-and-black. Horns and rattles sounded like tiny sounds in his ears, and his eyes saw only grotesque blurred shapes that swept across them.

"I'll get 'em off — they won't block any on me — they mustn't," he said to himself, closing his eyes.

Then, on top of the draining weakness that had him in its grip, came a sudden feeling of nausea, and he knew suddenly what the man opposite him with his head in his hands was fighting. He put his arms over the ledge of

the door, and rested his head on them, too weak to care that every one saw him, gulping in the stinging air in desperation.

All at once there came a grinding jerk and the car stopped. From the inside came Tompkins' angry, rasping voice:

"Every one up! Get out there! Quick! On the jump!"

Instinctively obedient, the vertigo left him, his mind cleared. He was out in the midst of the bobbing mass of blue sweaters, moving as in a nightmare through the black spectators, seeing ahead the mammoth stands, hearing the dull, engulfing roars as one hears at night the approaching surf.

Then they were struggling through the human barriers, and he saw something green at the bottom of a stormy pit, and a great growing roar of welcome smote him as of a descending gale, the hysterical cry of the American multitude, a roar acclaiming Yale.

"All ready!" said Dana's unrecognizable voice somewhere ahead. "On the trot, now!"

Instantly he was sweeping on to the field and up along the frantic stands of suddenly released blue. All indecision, all weakness, went with the first hoarse cry from his own. Something hot and alive seemed to flow back into his veins, and with every stride the spongy turf underneath seemed to send its strength and vitality into his legs.

From the other end of the field, through the somber crowd, an orange-and-black group was trickling, flowing into a band and sweeping out on the field, while the Princeton stands were surging to their feet, adding the mounting fury of their welcome to the deafening uproar

that suddenly bound the arena in the gripping hollow of a whirlwind.

"Line up, you blue devils," came Charlie de Soto's raucous cry. "On your toes. Get your teeth into it. Hard, now. Ha-a-ard!"

He was in action immediately, thinking only of the signals, sweeping down the field, now to the right, now to the left, stumbling in his eagerness.

"Enough," said the captain's voice, at last. "Get under your sweaters, fellows. Brown and Stover, start up some punts."

Dana and Dudley went back to practise catching. Brown, the center, pigskin under hand, set himself for the pass, while Stover, blowing on his hands, measured his distance. Opposite, Bannerman, the Princeton fullback, was setting himself for a similar attempt.

In the stands was a sudden craning hush as the great audience waited to see with its own eyes the disparity between the rival fullbacks.

Stover, standing out, felt it all instinctively, with a little nervous tremor — the quick stir in the stands, the muttered comments, the tense turning of even the cheer leaders.

Then the ball came shooting back to him. He caught it, turned it in his hands, and drove forward his leg with all his might. At the same moment, as if maliciously calculated, the great booming punt of Bannerman brought the Princeton stands, rollicking and gleeful, to their feet in a burst of triumph.

In his own stands there was no answering shout. Stover felt on his cheeks, under his eyes, two hot spots of anger. What did they know, who condemned him, of the sacrifice he had made, of the far more difficult thing

he was doing? He remembered Tompkins' advice; he could not compete with Bannerman in the air. Deliberately he sent his next punt low, swift, striking the ground about thirty yards away and rolling treacherously another fifteen feet before Dudley, who had swerved out, could stop it. This time from the mass almost a groan went up.

A sudden cold contempt for them, for everything, seized possession of Stover. He hated them all. He stooped, plucked a blade of grass, and stuck it defiantly between his teeth.

"Shoot that back a little lower, Brown," he said with a sudden quick authority, and again and again he sent off his fast, low-rolling punts.

"That's the stuff, Dink," said Tompkins, with a pat on the shoulder, "but you've got to get 'em off on the instant — remember that. Here, throw this sweater over you."

"All right."

He did not sit down, but walked back and forth with short steps, waiting for the interminable conference of the captains to be over. And again that same sinking, hollow feeling came over him in the suspense before the question that would be answered in the first shock of bodies.

The feeling he felt ran through the thousands gathered only to a spectacle. The cheers grew faint, lacking vitality, and the stir of feet was a nerve-racked stir. Dink gazed up at the high benches, trying to forget the interval of seconds that must be endured. It did not seem possible that he was to go out before them all. It seemed rather that in a far-off consciousness he was the same loyal little shaver who had squirmed so often on the top line of the benches, clinging to his knees, biting his lips, and looking weakly on the ground.

"All ready — get out, boys!"

Dana came running back. Yale had won the toss and had chosen to kick off.

Some one pulled his sweater from him, struck him a stinging slap between the shoulders, and propelled him on the field.

"Yale this way!"

They formed in a circle, heads down, arms locked over one another's shoulders, disputing the same air; and Dana, the captain, who believed in a victory, spoke:

"Now, fellows, one word. It's up to us. Do you understand what that means? It's up to us to win, the way Yale has won in the past — and win we're going to, no matter how long it takes or what's against us. Now, get mad, every one of you. Run 'em right off their feet. That's all."

The shoulders under Stover's left him. He went hazily to the place, a little behind the rest, where he knew he should go, waiting while Brown poised the football, waiting while the orange-and-black jerseys indistinctly scattered before him to their formation, waiting for the whistle for which he had waited all his life to release him.

And for a third time his legs seemed to crumble, and the whole blurred scheme of stands and field to reel away from him, and his heart to be lying before him on the ground where he could lean over and pick it up.

Then like a pistol shot the whistle went throbbing through his brain. He sprang forward as if out of the shell of himself, keen, alert, filled with a savage longing.

Down the field a Princeton halfback had caught the ball and was squirming back. Then a sudden upheaval, and a mass was spread on the ground.

"Guess he gained about fifteen on that," he said to himself. "They'll kick right off."

Dana came running back to support him. Out of the sky like a monstrous bird something round, yellow, and squirming came floating toward him. He was forced to run back, misjudged it a little, reached out, half fumbled it, and recovered it with a plunging dive just as Cockerell landed upon him.

"Get you next time, Dink," said the voice of his old school captain in his ear.

Stover, struggling to his feet, looked him coolly in the eye.

"No, you won't, Garry, and you know it. The next time I'm going back ten yards."

"Well, boy, we'll see."

They shook hands with a grim smile, while the field straggled up. He was lined up, flanked by Dana and Dudley, bending over, waiting for the signal. Three times De Soto, trying out the Princeton line, sent Dana plunging against the right tackle, barely gaining the distance. A fourth attempt being stopped for a loss, Stover dropped back for a kick on the second down.

The ball came a little low, and with it the whole line seemed torn asunder and the field filled with the rush of converging bodies. To have kicked would have been fatal. He dropped quickly on the ball, covering it, under the shock of his opponents.

Again he was back, waiting for the trial that was coming. He forgot that he was a freshman — forgot everything but his own utter responsibility.

"You center men, hold that line!" he cried. "You give me a chance! Give me time!"

Then the ball was in his hands, and, still a little hurried, he sent it too high over the frantic leaping rush, hurled to the ground the instant after.

The exchange had netted Princeton twenty yards. A

second time Bannerman lifted his punt, high, long, twisting and turning over itself in tricky spirals. It was a perfect kick, giving the ends exact time to cover it.

Stover, with arms outstretched, straining upward, cool as a Yankee, knew, from the rushing bodies he did not dare to look at, what was coming. The ball landed in his convulsive arms, and almost exactly with it Garry Cockerell's body shot into him and tumbled him clear off the ground, crashing down; but the ball was locked in his arms in one of those catches of which the marvel of the game is, not that they are not made oftener, but that they are made at all.

"Come on now, Yale," shouted Charlie De Soto's inflaming voice. "We've got to rip this line. Signal!"

Two masses on center, two futile straining, crushing attempts, and again he was called on to kick. The tackles he had received had steadied him, driving from his too imaginative mind all consideration but the direct present need.

He began to enjoy with a fierce delight this kicking in the very teeth of the frantic Princeton rushes, as he had stood on the beach waiting for great breakers to form above his head before diving through.

On the fourth exchange of kicks he stood on his own goal-line. The test had come at last. Dana, furious at being driven back without a Princeton rush, came to him wildly.

"Dink, you've got to make it good!"

"Take that long-legged Princeton tackle when he comes through," he said quietly. "Don't worry about me."

Luckily, they were over to the left side of the field. He chose his opening, and, kicking low, as Tompkins had coached him, had the joy of seeing the ball go flying over the ground and out of bounds at the forty-yard line.

The Princeton team, springing into position, at last opened its attack.

"Now we'll see," said Stover, chafing in the backfield.

Using apparently but one formation, a circular mass, which, when directly checked, began to revolve out toward end, always pushing ahead, always concealing the runner, the Princeton attack surely, deliberately, and confidently rolled down the field like a juggernaut.

From the forty-yard line to the thirty it came in two rushes, from the thirty to the twenty in three; and then suddenly some one was tricked, drawn in from the vital attack, and the runner, guarded by one interferer, swept past the unprotected end and set out for a touchdown.

Stover went forward to meet them like a shot, frantic to save the precious yards. How he did it he never quite knew, but somehow he managed to fling himself just in front of the interferer and go down with a death grip on one leg of the runner.

A cold sponge was being spattered over him, he was on his back fighting hard for his breath, when he again realized where he was. He tried to rise, remembering all at once.

"Did I stop him?"

"You bet you did."

Regan and Dudley had their arms about him, lifting him and walking him up and down.

"Get your breath back, old boy."

"I'm all right."

"Take your time; that Princeton duck hasn't come to yet!"

He perceived in the opposite group something prone on the ground, and the sight was like a tonic.

The ball lay inside the ten-yard line, within the sacred zone. In a moment, no longer eliminated, but close to

the breathing mass, he was at the back of his own men, shrieking and imploring:

"Get the jump, Yale!"

"Throw them back, Yale!"

"Fight 'em back!"

"You've got to, Yale — you've got to!"

Then, again and again, the same perfected grinding surge of the complete machine: three yards, two yards, two yards, and he was underneath the last mass, desperately blocking off some one who held the vital ball, hoping against hope, blind with the struggle, saying to himself:

"It isn't a touchdown! It can't be! We've stopped them! It's Yale's ball!"

Some one was squirming down through the gradually lightening mass. A great weight went from his back, and suddenly he saw the face of the referee seeking the exact location of the ball.

"What is it?" he asked wildly.

"Touchdown."

Some one dragged him to his feet, and, unnoticing, he leaned against him, gazing at the ball that lay just over the goal-line, seeing with almost a bull-like rage the Princeton substitutes frantically capering up and down the line, hugging one another, agitating their blankets, turning somersaults.

"Line up, Yale," said the captain's unyielding voice, "this is only the beginning. We'll get 'em."

But Stover knew better. The burst of anger past, his head cleared. That Princeton team was going to score again, by the same process, playing on his weakness, exchanging punts, hoping to block one of his until within striking distance, and the size of the score would depend on how long he could stand it off.

"Goal," came the referee's verdict, and with it another

roar from somewhere. He went up the field looking straight ahead, hearing, like a sound in a memory, a song of jubilation and the brassy accompaniment of a band.

Again the same story: ten, fifteen yards gained on every exchange of kicks, and a slow retrogression toward their own goal. Time and again they flung themselves against a stronger line, in a vain effort to win back the last yards. Once, in a plunge through center, he found an opening, and went plunging along for ten yards; but at the last the ball was Princeton's on the thirty-five-yard line, and a second irresistible march bore Yale back, fighting and frantic over the line for the second score.

Playing became an instinct with him. He no longer feared the soaring punts that came tumbling to him from the clouds. His arms closed around them like tentacles, and he was off for the meager yards he could gain before he went down with a crash. He no longer felt the shock of the desperate tackles he was called on to make, nor the stifling pressure above him when he flung himself under the serried legs of the mass.

He had but one duty — to be true to what he had promised Tompkins: not to fumble, not to miss a tackle, to get each punt off clean.

All at once, as he was setting in position, a body rushed in, seizing the ball.

"Time!"

The first half was over, and the score was: Princeton, 18; Yale, 0.

Then all at once he felt his weariness. He went slowly, grimly with the rest back to the dressing-room. A group of urchins clustering to a tree shrieked at them:

"O you Yaleses!"

He heard that, and that was all he heard. A sort of

rebellion was in him. He had done all that he could do, and now they would haul him over the coals, thinking that was what he needed.

"Oh, I know what'll be said," he thought grimly. "We'll be told we can win out in the second, and all that rot."

Then he was in the hands of the rubbers, having his wet, clinging suit stripped from him, being rubbed and massaged. He did not want to look at his comrades, least of all Dana. He only wanted to get back, to have it over with.

"Yale, I want you to listen to me."

He looked up. In the center stood Tompkins, preternaturally grave, trembling a little with nervous, uncontrollable twitches of his body.

"You're up against a great Princeton team — the greatest I remember. You can't win. You never had a chance to win. But, Yale, you're going to do something to make us proud of you. You're going to hold that score where it is! Do you hear me? All you've got left is your nerve and the chance to show that you can die game. That's all you're going to do; but, by heaven, you're going to do that! You're going to die game, Yale! Every mother's son of you! And when the game's over we're going to be prouder of your second half than the whole blooming Princeton bunch over their first. There's your chance. Make us rise up and yell for you. Will you, Yale?"

He passed from man to man, advising, exhorting, or storming, until he came to Stover.

"Dink," he said, putting out his hand and changing his tone suddenly, "I haven't a word to say to you. Play the game as you've been doing — only play it out."

Stover felt a sudden rush of shame; all the fatigue left him as if by magic.

"If Charlie'll only give me a few chances at the center. I know I could gain there," he said eagerly.

"You'll get a chance later on, perhaps, but you've quite enough to do now."

The second view of the arena was clear to him, even to insignificant details. He thought the cheer leaders, laboring muscularly with their long megaphones, strangely out of place — especially a short, fat little fellow in a white voluminous sweater. He saw in the crowd a face or two that he recognized — Bob Story in a group of pretty girls, all superhumanly glum and cast down. Then he had shed his sweater and was out on the field, back under the goal-posts, ready for the bruising second half to begin.

"All ready, Yale!"

"All ready."

Again the whistle and the rush of bodies. Dana caught the ball, and, shifting and dodging, shaking off the first tacklers, carried it back twenty yards. Two short, jamming plunges by Dudley, through Regan, who alone was outplaying his man, yielded first down. Then an attempt at Cockerell's end brought a loss and the inevitable kick.

Instead of a return punt, the Princeton eleven prepared to rush the ball.

"Why the deuce do they do that?" he thought, biting his fingers nervously.

Opening up their play, Princeton swept out toward Bangs's end, forcing it back for four yards, and immediately made first down with a long, sweeping lunge at the other end.

Suddenly Stover, in the backfield, watching like a cat, started forward with a cry. Far off to one side, a Prince-

ton back, unperceived, was bending down, pretending to be fastening one of his shoe-laces.

"Look out — look out to the left!"

His cry came too late. The Princeton quarter made a long toss straight across, twenty yards, to the loitering half, who caught it and started down field clear of the line of scrimmage.

A Princeton forward tried to intercept him, but Stover flung him aside, and, without waiting, went forward at top speed to meet the man who came without flinching to his tackle. It was almost head on, and the shock, which left Stover stunned, instinctively clinging to his man, sent the ball free, where Dana pounced upon it.

"Holy Mike, what a tackle!" said Regan's voice. "Any bones broken?"

"Of course not," he said gruffly.

Some one insisted on sponging his face, much to his disgust.

"How's the other fellow?" he said grimly.

"He's a tough nut; he's up, too!"

"He must be."

The recovery of the ball gave them a short respite, but it served also to enrage the other line, which rose up and absolutely smothered the next plays. Again his kick seemed to graze the outstretched fingers of the Princeton forwards, and he laughed a strange laugh which he remembered long after.

This time the punting duel was resumed until, well within Yale territory, Cockerell looked around and gave the signal for attack.

"Now, Yale, stop it, stop it!" Dink said, talking to himself.

But there was no stopping that attack. Powerless, not

daring to approach, he saw the blue line bend back again and again, and the steady, machine-like rolling up of the orange and black. Over the twenty-five-yard line it came, and on past the twenty.

"Oh, Yale, will you let 'em score again?" De Soto was shrieking.

"You're on your ten-yard line, Yale."

"Hold them!"

"Hold them!"

Two yards at a time, they were rolled back with a mathematical, unfeeling precision.

"Third down; two yards to go!"

"Yale, stop it!"

"Yale!"

And stop it they did, by a bare six inches. Behind the goal-line, Charlie De Soto came up, as he stood measuring his distance for a kick.

"How are you, Dink? Want a bit of a rest — sponge-off?"

"Rest be hanged!" he said fiercely. "Come on with that ball."

Suddenly, instead of kicking low and off to the right, he sent the ball straight down the field with every ounce of strength he could put in it. The punt, the best he had made, catching the back by surprise, went over his head, rolling up the field before he could recover it. A great roar went up from the Yale stands, fired by the spirit of resistance.

Thereafter it had all a grim sameness, except, in a strange way, it seemed to him that nothing that had gone before counted — that everything they were fighting for was to keep their goal-line inviolate. Nothing new seemed to happen. When he went fiercely into a mêlée, finding his man somehow, or felt the rush of bodies about

him as he managed each time to get clear his punt, he had the same feeling:

"Why, I've done this before."

A dozen times they stopped the Princeton advance, sometimes far away and sometimes near, once within the five-yard line. Every moment, now, some one cried wearily:

"What's the time?"

The gray of November twilights, the haze that settles over the struggles of the gridiron like the smoke of a battle-field, began to close in. And then a sudden fumble, a blocked kick, and by a swift turn of luck it was Yale's ball for the first time in Princeton's territory. One or two subs came rushing in eagerly from the side lines. Every one was talking at once:

"What's the time?"

"Five minutes more."

"Get together, Yale!"

"Show 'em how!"

"Ram it through them!"

"Here's our chance!"

Stover, beside himself, ran up to De Soto and flung his arms about his neck, whispering in his ear:

"Give me a chance — you must give me a chance! Send me through Regan!"

He got his signal, and went into the breach with every nerve set, fighting his way behind the great bulk of Regan for a good eight yards. A second time he was called on, and broke the line for another first down.

Regan was transformed. All his calm had gone. He loomed in the line like a Colossus, flinging out his arms, shouting:

"We're rotten, are we? Carry it right down the field, boys!"

Every one caught the infection. De Soto, with his hand to his mouth, was shouting hoarsely, through the bedlam of cheers, his gleeful slogan:

"We don't want to live forever, boys! What do we care? We've got to face Yale after this. Never mind your necks. We've got the doctors! A little more murder, now! Shove that ball down that field, Yale! Send them back on stretchers! Nineteen — eight — six — four — Ha-a-ard!"

Again and again Stover was called on, and again and again, with his whole team behind him or Regan's great arm about him, struggling to keep his feet, crawling on his knees, fighting for every last inch, he carried the ball down the field twenty, thirty yards on.

He forgot where he was, standing there with blazing eyes and colorless face. He forgot that he was only the freshman, as he had that night in the wrestling bout. He gave orders, shouted advice, spurred them on. He felt no weariness; nothing could tire him. His chance had come at last. He went into the line each time blubbering, laughing with the fierce joy of it, shouting to himself:

"I'm the weak spot, am I? I'll show them!"

And the certainty of it all overwhelmed him. Nothing could stop him now. He knew it. He was going to score. He was going to cross that line only fifteen yards away.

"Give me that ball again!" he cried to De Soto.

Then something seemed to go wrong. De Soto and Dudley were shrieking out something, protesting wildly.

"What's wrong?" he cried.

"They're calling time on us!"

"No, no, it's not possible! It's not time!"

He turned hysterically, beseechingly, catching hold of the referee's arm, not knowing what he did.

"Mr. Referee, it isn't time. Mr. Referee—"

"Game's over," said Captain Dana's still voice. "Get together, Yale. Cheer for Princeton now. Make it a good one!"

But no one heard them in the uproar that suddenly went up. Nature could not hold out; the disappointment had been too severe. Stover stood with his arms on Regan's shoulders, and together they bowed their heads and went choking through the crowd. Others rushed around him—he thought he heard Tompkins saying something. He seemed lost in the crowd that stared at him, struggling to hold back his grief. Only one figure stood out distinctly—the figure of a white-haired man, who took off his hat to him as he went through the barrier, and shouted something unintelligible—a strangely excited white-haired man.

All the way back to the gymnasium, through the jubilant street, Dink sat staring out unseeing, his eyes blurred, a great lump in his throat, possessed by a fatigue such as he had never known before. No one spoke. Through his own brain ceaselessly the score, strangely jumbled, went its tiring way:

"Eighteen to nothing—to nothing! Eighteen to six—it should have been eighteen to six. Eighteen to nothing. It's awful—awful! If I only could punt!"

His ideal, his dream of a Yale team, had always been of victory, not like this, to go down powerless, swept aside, routed—to such a defeat!

Then he shut his eyes, fighting over again those last desperate rushes against defeat, against hope, against time, unable to believe it was over.

"How many times did I take that ball?" he thought wearily. "Was it seven or eight? If I'd only got free that last time—kept my feet!"

He remembered flashes of that last frenzy — the face of a Princeton rusher who reached for him and missed, the teeth savage as a wolf's and the strained mouth. He saw again Regan turning around to pull him through, Regan, the brute, raging like a fury. He remembered the quick, strange white looks that Charlie De Soto had given him, wondering each time if he had the strength to go on. Why had they stopped them? They had a right to that last rally!

"Eighteen to nothing. Poor Dana — I wonder what he'll do?"

He remembered, in a far-off way, tales he had heard of other captains, disgraced by defeat, breaking down, leaving college, disappearing. He dreaded the moment when they should break silence, when the awful thing must be talked over, there in the gymnasium, feeling acutely all the misery and ache Dana must be feeling.

"All right there, Stover? Let yourself go, if you want to."

The voice was Tompkins', who was looking up at him anxiously, the gymnasium at his back.

"All right," he said gruffly, raising himself with an effort and half slipping to the ground.

"Sure? How's Dudley?"

He realized in a curious way that others, too, had gone through the game. Then Regan's arm was around him. He did not put it from him, grateful for any support in his weakness. Together they went through the crowd of ragamuffins staring open-mouthed at a defeated team.

"What's the matter with Dudley?"

"Played through all the last with a couple of broken ribs."

"Dudley?"

"Yes. Go as slow as you want, old bantam."

"If we only could have had another minute, Tom—" He stopped, unable to go on, shaking his head.

"I know, I know."

"It was tough."

"Darned tough."

"I thought we were going to do it."

"Now, you shut up, young rooster. Don't think of it any more. You played like a fiend. We're proud of you."

"Poor Dana!"

Upstairs a couple of rubbers took charge of him, stripping him and rubbing him rigorously. Two or three coaches came up to him, gripping him with silent grips, patting him on the back. The cold bite of the shower brought back some of his vitality, and he dressed mechanically with the squad, who had nothing to say to one another.

"Yale, I want to talk to you boys a moment."

He looked up. In the center of the room was Rivers, coach of coaches, around whom the traditions of football had been formed. Stover looked at him dully, wondering how he could stand there filled with such energy.

"Now, boys, the game's over. We've lost. It's our turn; we've got to stand it. One thing I want you to remember when you go out of here. *Yale teams take their medicine!*"

His voice rose to a nervous staccato, and the sharp, cold eye seemed to look into every man, just as at school the Doctor used to awe them.

"Do you understand? Yale teams take their medicine! No talking, no reasoning, no explanations, no excuses, and no criticism! The thing's over and done. We'll

have a dinner to-night, and we'll start in on next year; and next year nothing under the sun's going to stop us! Go out; take off your hats! A great Princeton team licked you — licked you well! That's all. You deserved to score. You didn't. Hard luck. But those who saw you try for it won't forget it! We're proud of that second half! No talk, now, about what might have happened; no talk about what you're going to do. Shut up! Remember — grin and take your medicine."

"Mr. Rivers, I'd like to say a few words."

Stover, with almost a feeling of horror, saw Dana step forward quietly, purse his lips, look about openly, and say:

"Mr. Rivers, I understand what you mean, and what's underneath it all, and I thank you for it. At the same time, it's up to me to take the blame, and I'm not going to dodge it. I've been a poor captain. I thought I knew more than you did, and I didn't. I've made one fool blunder after another. But I did it honestly. Well, that doesn't matter — let that go. I say this because it's right, too, I should take my medicine, and because I don't want next year's captain to botch the job the way I've done. And now, just a word to you men. You've done everything I asked you to do, and kept your mouths shut, no matter what you thought of it. You've been loyal, and you'll be loyal, and there'll be no excuses outside. But I want you men to know that I'll remember it, and I want to thank you. That's all."

Instantly there was a buzz of voices, and one clear note dominating it — Regan's voice, stirred beyond thought of self:

"Boys, we're going to give that captain a cheer. Are you ready? Hip — hip!"

Somehow the cry that went up took from Dink all the

sting of defeat. He went out, head erect, back to meet his college, no longer shrinking from the ordeal, proud of his captain, proud of his coach, and proud of a lesson he had learned bigger than a victory.

CHAPTER XI

AFTER the drudgery of the football season he had a few short weeks of gorgeous idleness, during which he browsed through a novel a day, curled up on his window-seat, rolling tobacco clouds through the fog of smokers in the room. He had won his spurs and the right to lounge, and he looked forward eagerly to the rest of the year as a time for reading and the opening up of the friendships of which he had dreamed.

Old age settled down rapidly upon him, and at eighteen that malady appears in its most virulent form. Perhaps there was a little justification. The test he had gone through had educated him to self-control in its most difficult form. He was not simply the big man of the class, the first to emerge to fame, but the prospective captain of a future Yale eleven. A certain gravity was requisite — moreover, it was due the University. To have seen the burning letters S-T-O-V-E-R actually vibrating on the front pages of metropolitan papers, to have gazed on his distinguished (though slightly smudged) features, ruined by an unfeeling photographer, but disputing nevertheless the public attention with statesmen and champions of the pugilistic ring — to have felt these heavenly sensations at the age of eighteen could not be lightly disguised.

So he lay back among welcome cushions, book in hand, and listened with a tolerant ear to the rapid-fire comedy of McNab and Buck Waters. He stayed much in his own room, which became a sort of lounging spot where the air was always blue with smoke and a mandolin or

guitar was strumming a low refrain or a group near the fireplace was noisy with the hazards of the national game.

Pretty much every one of importance in the class dropped in on him. The preliminary visiting period of the sophomore societies was nearly over. With the opening of the winter term the hold-offs and elections would begin. He understood that those who were uncertain wished the advantage of being seen in his company — that his, in fact, was now the "right" crowd.

He intended to call on several men who interested him: Brockhurst, who had made his appearance with a story in the *Lit* which announced him as a possible future chairman; Gimbel, about whose opinions and sincerity he was in doubt; and, above all, Regan, who genuinely attracted him. But, somehow, having now nothing to do, his afternoons and evenings seemed always filled, and he continually postponed until the morrow what suggested itself during the day. Besides, there was a complacent delight in being his own master again and of looking forward to such a period of independent languor.

The first discordant note to intrude itself upon this ideal was a remark of Le Baron's during one of the evening visits. These embassies were always conducted with punctiliousness and gravity. The inquisitorial sophomores arrived about eight o'clock in groups of three and four. As McCarthy was the object of attention from a different society, Stover, when the former's inspectors arrived, shook hands gravely, and shortly discovered that he had a letter to post at the corner. When the committee on Stover appeared trimly at the door, McCarthy rose at once to return a hypothetical book, after which the conversation began with about as much spontaneity and zest as would be permitted to a board of alienists sitting in judgment on a victim. The sophomores were

embarrassed with their own impromptu dignity, and the freshmen at the constraint of their superiors.

On one such occasion, after the committee of four had spent fifteen minutes in the grave discussion of a kindergarten topic, and had filed out with funereal solemnity, Le Baron returned for a more intimate conversation.

Since the night of his introduction to college, Stover had had only occasional glimpses of Le Baron. True, he was generally of the visiting committee that called every other night for perfunctory inspection, but through it all the sophomore had adopted an attitude of almost defensive aloofness and impartiality.

"I want to talk over some of the men in the class," said Le Baron, falling into an arm-chair and picking up a pipe, while his manner changed to naturalness and equality. Stover understood at once that the attitude was a notice served on him of the security of his own position.

"Dink, I want to know your opinion. What do you think of Brockhurst, for instance?"

"Brockhurst? Why, I hardly know him."

"Is he liked?"

"Why, yes."

"Who are his friends?"

Stover thought a moment.

"Why, I think he rather keeps to himself. He strikes me as being — well, a little undeveloped — rather shy."

"Do you like him?"

"I do."

"And Schley?"

The question was put abruptly, Le Baron raising his eyes to get his answer from Stover's face.

"Schley?" said Dink, considering a little. "Why, Schley seems to —"

"Regan?" said Le Baron, satisfied.

"One of the best in the class!"

"He seems a rather rough diamond."

"He's proud as Lucifer — but he has more to him than any one I know."

"It's a question what he'll do."

"I'd back him every time."

"You are quite enthusiastic about him," said Le Baron, looking at him with a little quizzical surprise.

"He's a man," said Stover stoutly.

"Of course, the football captaincy will probably be between you two."

"Regan?" said Stover, amazed.

"Either you or Regan."

Stover had never thought of him as a rival for his dearest ambition. He remained silent, digesting the possibility, aware of Le Baron's searching inquiry.

"Of course, you have nine chances out of ten, but the race is a long one."

"He would make a good captain," Stover said slowly.

"You think so?"

"I hadn't thought of it before," Stover said, with a sudden falling inside, "but he has the stuff in him of a leader all right."

"I wish he weren't quite so set," said Le Baron. "He hasn't made a particularly favorable impression on some of the fellows."

An involuntary smile came to Stover at the thought of Regan's probable reception of a committee of inspection.

"He doesn't perhaps realize the importance of some things," he said carefully.

"He doesn't," said Le Baron, who was not without a sense of humor. "It's a pity, though, for his sake. I wish you'd talk to him a little."

"I will."

Le Baron rose.

"By the way, what are you going out for this spring?"

"This spring?" said Stover, surprised.

"Ever rowed any?"

"Never."

"That doesn't make any difference. You learn the stroke quicker — no bad habits."

"I'm light as mischief."

"Oh, I don't know — not for the freshman. We want to stimulate the interest in rowing up here. It's a good example for a man like you to come out. Ever done anything in baseball or the track?"

"No."

"Rowing's the stunt for you." He went toward the door, and turned. "Have a little chat with Regan. I admire the fellow, but he needs to rub up a bit with you fellows and get the sharp edges off him. By the way, when you start rowing I'll get hold of you and give you a little extra coaching."

When McCarthy came grinning through the door, he found Dink, his legs drawn up Turkish fashion, staring rebelliously at the ceiling.

"Hello! In love, or what?" said Tough, stopping short. "Recovering, perhaps, from the brilliant conversation?"

"By George, I'm not going out for anything more!" said Dink, between his teeth.

"Heavens! haven't you slaved enough?"

"You bet I have. I'll be hanged if I'm going through here — just varsity material. I'm going to be a little while my own master."

"You think so?" said McCarthy, with a short, incredu-

lous laugh. "Every one's doing something." McCarthy was a candidate for the baseball nine.

"Have you heard anything about Regan?" said Stover, between puffs.

"In what way?"

"Have any of the sophomores been around to see him?"

McCarthy exploded into laughter. "*Have* they? Didn't you hear what happened?"

"No. What?"

"They spent half the night locating his diggings, and when they got them the old rhinoceros wouldn't receive them."

"Why not?"

"Hadn't time, he said, to be fooling with them."

"The old chump!"

"Lucky dog," said McCarthy, between his teeth. "I wish I had the nerve to do the same."

"What the deuce?"

"It makes me boil! I can't sit up and have a solemn bunch of fools look me over. I can't be natural."

"It's give and take," said Dink, smiling. "You'll think yourself the lord of the universe next year."

"I'm not so sure," said McCarthy, gloomily.

"Rats!"

"Oh, you — you've a cinch," said McCarthy. "They're not picking you to pieces and dissecting you. Half the crowd that come to see me have got some friends in the class they'd rather see in than me. I'm darned uncertain, and I know it."

Stover, who believed the contrary, laughed at him. He rose and went out, determined to find Regan and make him understand conditions.

His walk led him along the dark ways of College Street into the forgotten street where, under the roof of a bakery, Regan had found a breathing-hole for five dollars a month.

For the first time a little feeling of jealousy went through Stover as he swung along. Why should he help build up the man who might snatch from him his ambition? Why the deuce had Le Baron mentioned Regan as a possible captain? No one else thought of such a thing. Compared to him, Regan was a novice in football knowledge and experience. Still, it was true that the man had a stalwart, unflinching way of moving on that impressed. There was a danger there with which he must reckon.

He found Regan in carpet slippers and sweater, bending grimly over the next day's Greek as if it were a rock to be shattered with the weight of his back.

"8-16-6-9-47," said Stover, in a hallo, giving the signal that had sent him through the center.

Regan started up.

"Hello, Dink, old bantam; glad to hear your voice."

Stover entered, with a glance at the room. A cot, a bureau, a washstand reënforced by ropes, a pine table scorched and blistered, and a couple of chairs were the entire equipment. Half the gas globe was left and two-thirds of the yellow-green shade at the window. In the corner was the battle-scarred valise which had brought Regan's whole effects to college.

"Boning out the Greek?" said Stover, placing a straight chair against the wall so that his feet could find the ledge of the window.

"Wrestling with it."

"Don't you use a trot?" said Stover in some surprise, perceiving the absence of the handy, literal short-cut to recitation.

"Can't afford to."

"Why not?" said Stover, wondering if Regan was a gospel shark, after all.

"I've got too much to learn," said Regan, leaning back and elevating his legs in the national position. "You know something; I don't. You can bluff; I'm a rotten bluffer. I've got to train my whole mind, lick it into shape and make it work for me, if I'm going to do what I want."

"Tom, what are you aiming for?"

"You'd never guess."

"Well, what?"

"Politics."

"Politics?" said Stover, opening his mouth.

"Exactly," said Regan, puffing at his corncob pipe. "I want to go back out West and get in the fight. It's a glorious fight out there. A real fight. You don't know the West, Stover."

"No."

"We believe in something out there, and we get up and fight for it — independence, new ideas, clean government, hard fighters."

"I hadn't thought of you that way," said Stover, more and more surprised.

"That's the only thing I care about," said Regan frankly. "I've come from nothing, and I believe in that nothing. But to do anything I've got to get absolute hold of myself."

"Tom, you ought to get in with the fellows more. You ought to know all kinds," said Stover, feeling an opening.

"I will, when I get the right," said Regan, nodding.

"Why the devil don't you let the University help you out a while? You can pay it back," said Stover angrily.

"Never! I know it could be done, but not for me," said Regan, shaking his head. "What I need is the hardest things to come up against, and I'm not going to dodge them."

"Still, you ought to be with us; you ought to make friends."

"I'm going to do that," said Regan, nodding. "I'm going to get in at South Middle after Christmas and perhaps get some work in the Coöp." He took up a sheet of paper jotted over with figures. "I'm about fifty dollars to the good; a couple of weeks' work at Christmas will bring that up about twenty more. If I can make a hundred and fifty this summer I'll have a good start. I want to do it, because I want to play football. It's bully! I like the fight in it!"

"What sort of work will you do?" said Stover curiously.

"I may go in the surface cars down in New York."

"Driving?"

"Sure. They get good pay. I could get work in the mines — I've done that — but it's pretty tough."

"But, Tom, what the deuce do you pick out the hardest grind for? Make friends with fellows who only want to know you and like you, and you'll get a dozen openings where you'll make twice what you get at manual labor."

"Well, there's this to it," said Regan ruminatively, "It's an opportunity I won't always have."

"What the deuce do you mean?"

"The opportunity to meet the fellow who gets the grind of life — to understand what he thinks of himself, and especially what he thinks of those above him. I won't have many more chances to see him on the ground floor, and some day I've got to know him well enough to

convince him. See? By the way, it would be a good college course for a lot of you fellows if you got in touch with the real thing also."

"Are you a socialist?" said Stover, who vaguely associated the term with dynamite and destruction.

"I may be, but I don't know it."

"I say, Tom, do you go in for debating and all that sort of thing?"

"You bet I do; but it comes hard as hen's teeth."

Stover, who had waited for an opportunity to volunteer advice, finding no opening, resolved to take the dilemma by the horns.

"Tom, I think you're wrong about one thing."

"What's that?"

"Holding aloof so much."

"Particularly what?"

"I'm thinking about sophomore societies, for one thing. Why the deuce don't you give the fellows a chance to help you?"

"Oh, you mean the dinky little bunch that came around to call on me," said Regan thoughtfully.

"Yes. Now, why turn them out?"

"Why, they bored me, and, besides, I haven't time for anything like that. There are too many big things here."

"They can help you like the mischief, now and afterward."

"Thanks; I'll help myself. Besides, I don't want to get their point of view."

"Why not?"

"Too limited."

"Have you been talking to Gimbel?" said Stover, wondering.

"Gimbel? No; why?"

"Because he is organizing the class against them."

"That doesn't interest me, either."

"What do you make of Gimbel?"

"Gimbel's all right; a good politician."

"Is he sincere?"

"Every one's sincere."

"You mean every one's convinced of his own sincerity."

"Sure; easiest person in the world to convince."

Stover laughed a little consciously, wondering for a brief moment if the remark could be directed at him. Curiously enough, the more the blunt antagonism of Regan impressed him, the more he was reassured that the man was too radical ever to challenge his leadership. He rose to go, his conscience satisfied by the half-hearted appeal he had made.

"I say, Dink," said Regan, laying his huge paw on his shoulder, "don't get your head turned by this social business."

"Heavens, no!"

"'Cause there's some real stuff in you, boy, and some day it's coming out. Thanks, by the way, for wanting to make me a society favorite."

Dink left with a curious mixture of emotions. Regan always had an ascendency over him he could not explain. It irritated him that he could not shake it off, and yet he was genuinely chained to the man.

"Why the deuce did Le Baron put that in my head?" he said to himself, for the tenth time. "If Regan beats me out for captain it'll only be because he's older and has got a certain way about him. Well, I suppose if I'm to be captain I've got to close up more; I can't go cutting up like a kid. I've got to be older."

He resolved to be more dignified, more melancholy,

shorter of speech, and consistent in gravity. For the first time he felt what it meant to calculate his chances. Before, everything had come to him easily. He had missed the struggle and the heartburnings. Now, suddenly, a shadow had fallen across the open road, the shadow of one whom he had regarded as a sort of protégé. He had thoughts of which he was ashamed, for at the bottom he was glad that Regan would not be of a sophomore society — that that advantage would be denied him; and, a little guiltily, he wondered if he had tried as hard as he might have to show him the opportunity.

"If they ever know him as I do," he said, with a generous revulsion, "he'll be the biggest thing in the class." York Street and the busy windows of Pierson Hall came into his vision. A group of sophomores, ending their tour of visits, passed him, saluting him cordially. He thought all at once, with a sharp rebellion, how much freer Regan was, with his own set purpose, than he under the tutelage of Le Baron.

"I wonder what I'd do if no darn sophomore societies existed," he said to himself thoughtfully. And then, going up the stairs to his room, he said to McCarthy as he entered: "I guess, after all, I'll get out and slave again this spring — might as well heel the crew. I'm just varsity material — that's all!"

CHAPTER XII

THE first weeks of the competition for the crew were not exacting, and consisted mostly of eliminating processes. Stover had consequently still enough leisure to gravitate naturally into that necessity of running into debt which comes to every youth who has just won the privilege of a yearly allowance; the same being solemnly understood to cover all the secret and hidden needs of the flesh as well as those that are outwardly exposed to the admiration of the multitude.

Now, the lure of personal adornment and the charm of violent neckties and outrageous vests had come to him naturally, as such things come, shortly after the measles, under the educating influence of a hopeless passion which had passed but had left its handiwork.

About a week after the opening of the term, Stover was drifting down Chapel Street in the company of Hungerford and McCarthy, when, in the window of the most predatory haberdasher's, he suddenly was fascinated by the most beautiful thing he had ever seen adorning a window. A tinge of masculine modesty prevented his remaining in struck admiration before it, especially in the presence of McCarthy and Hungerford, whose souls could rest content in jerseys and sweaters; but half an hour later, slipping away, he returned, fascinated. Chance had been kind to him. It was still there, the most beautiful green shirt he had ever beheld — not the diluted green of ordinary pistache ice-cream, but the deep, royal hue of a glorious emerald!

He had once, in the school days when he was blossoming into a man of fashion, experienced a similar sensation before a cravat of pigeon-blood red. He peered through the window to see if any one he knew was present, and glanced up the street to assure himself that a mob was not going to collect. Then he entered nonchalantly. The clerk, who recognized him, greeted him with ingratiating unction.

"Glad to see you here, Mr. Stover. What can I do for you?"

"I thought I'd look at some shirts," he said, in what he believed a masterly haphazard manner.

"White lawn — something with a thin stripe?"

"Well, something in a color — solid color."

He waited patiently, considering solicitously twenty inconsequential styles, until the spruce clerk, casually producing the one thing, said:

"Would that appeal to you?"

"It's rather nice," he said, gazing at it. Entranced, he stared on. Then a new difficulty arose. People didn't enter a shop just to purchase one shirt, and, besides, he was known. So he selected three other shirts and added the beautiful green thing to them in an unostentatious manner, saying:

"Send around these four shirts, will you? What's the tax?"

"Very pleased to have you open an account, Mr. Stover," said the clerk. "Pay when you like."

Stover took this as a personal tribute to his public reputation. Likewise, it opened up to him startling possibilities, so he said in a bored way:

"I suppose I might just as well."

"Thank you, Mr. Stover — thank you very much! Anything more? Some rather tasty neckties here for

conservative dressers. Collars? Something like this would be very becoming to you. We've just got in a very smart line of silk socks. All the latest bonton styles. Look them over — you don't need to buy anything."

When Stover finally was shown to the door, he had clandestinely and with great astuteness acquired the green shirt on the following terms:

One green shirt (imported)	$ 5
Three decoy shirts	9
Four silk ties (to go with green shirt)	8
One dozen Roxburgh turndown collars (to complete same)	3
One dozen Gladstone collars (an indiscretion)	3
One half dozen silk socks (bonton style)	12
Total for one green shirt	$40

By the time he had made this mental calculation he was half way up the block. Then, his extravagance overwhelming him, he virtuously determined to send back the Gladstone collars, to show the clerk that, while he was a man of fashion, he still had a will of his own.

Refreshed then by this firm conscientious resolve, he went down York Street, where he was hailed by Hungerford from an upper story, and went in to find a small group sitting in inspection of several bundles of tailoring goods which were being displayed in the center of the room by a little bow-legged Yankee with an open appealing countenance.

"I say, Dink, you ought to get in on this," said Hungerford at his entrance.

"What's the game?"

"Here's a wonderful chance. Little bright-eyes here has got a lot of goods dirt cheap and he's giving us the first chance. You see it's this way: he travels for a firm and the end of the season he gets all the samples for himself, so he can let them go dirt cheap."

"Half price," said the salesman nodding. "Half price on everything."

"I've bought a bundle," said Troutman. "It's wonderful goods."

"How much?" said Stover, considering.

"Only twenty dollars for enough to make up a suit. Twenty's right, isn't it, Skenk?"

"Twenty for this — twenty-two for that. You remember I said twenty-two."

"Let me see the stuff," said Stover, as though he had been the mainstay of custom tailors all his life.

Now the crowd was a New York one, a little better groomed than their companions, affecting the same predilections for indiscreet vests and modish styles that would make them appreciative of the supremacy of green in the haberdashery arts.

"This is rather good style," he said, with a glance at Troutman's genteel trousers. "What sort of goods do you call it?"

"Imported Scotch cheviot," said the salesman in a confidential whisper.

Stover looked again at Troutman, who tried discreetly, without being seen by the unsuspecting Yankee, to convey to him in a look the fact that it was a crime to acquire the goods at such a price.

Thus tipped off, Dink bought a roll that had in it a distinct reminiscent tinge of green, and saw it carried to the house, for fear the salesman should suddenly repent of the sacrifice.

At half past eight that night, as he and Tough McCarthy were painfully excavating a bit of Greek prose for the morrow, McNab came rushing in.

"Get out, Dopey, we're boning," said McCarthy, reaching for a tennis racket.

"Boys, the greatest bargain you ever heard," said McNab excitedly, "come in before it's too late!"

"Bargain?" said Stover, frowning, for the word was beginning to cloy.

McNab, with a show of pantomime, squinted behind the window curtains and opened the closet door.

"Look here, Dopey, you get out," said Tough, wrathfully, "you're faking."

"I'm looking for customs officers," said McNab mysteriously.

"What! I say, what's this game?"

"Boys, we've got a couple of *Cuba libre* dagos rounded up and dancing on a string."

"For the love of Mike, Dopey, be intelligible."

"It's cigars," said McNab at last.

"Don't want them!"

"But it's smuggled cigars!"

"Oh!"

"Wonderful, pure Havanas, priceless, out of a museum."

"You don't say so."

"And all for the cause of *Cuba libre*. You're for *Cuba libre*, aren't you?"

"Sure we are."

"Well, these men are patriots."

"Who found them?"

"Buck Waters. They were just going into Pierson Hall to let the sophs have all the candy. Buck sidetracked them and started them down our row. Hungerford bought twenty-five dollars' worth."

"Twenty-five? Holy cats!"

"For the cause of *Cuba libre!* Joe is very patriotic. All the boys came up handsomely."

"Are they good cigars?" said Dink who, since his

purchases of the day, was not exactly moved to tears by the financial needs of an alien though struggling nation.

"My boy, immense! Wait till you smoke one!"

At this moment there came a gentle scratching at the door, and a chocolate pair appeared, with Buck Waters in the background.

"Emanuel Garcia and Henry Clay!" said McNab irreverently.

"They smuggled the cigars right through the Spanish lines," said Waters who, from constant recital, had caught the spirit of unconquerable revolution.

"How do you know?" said McCarthy suspiciously, watching the unstrapping of the cigar boxes.

"I speak French," said Waters with pride, and turning to his protégés he continued fluently, "*Vous êtes patriots, vous avez battlez, soldats n'est-ce-pas?* You see, they have had a whole family chopped up for the cause. The Cuban Junta has sent them over to raise money — very good family."

"Let's see the cigars," said Stover. "How much a box?"

Curiously enough this seemed to be a phrase of English which could be understood without difficulty.

"Fourteen dollar."

"That's for a box of a hundred," said McNab, who screwed up the far side of his face, to indicate bargaining was in order.

"Of course," said Buck Waters, "everything you give goes to the cause. Remember that."

"Try one," said McNab.

The smaller Cuban with an affable smile held up a bundle.

"Nice white teeth he's got," said Buck Waters encouragingly.

"Don't let him shove one over on you," said McCarthy warningly.

Waters and McNab were indignant.

"Oh, I say fellows, come on. They are patriots."

"If they could understand you they would go right up in the air."

"Nevertheless and notwithstanding," said McCarthy, indicating with his finger, "I'll take this one; it appeals to me."

"I'll worry this one," said Dink with equal astuteness.

They took several puffs, watched by the enthusiastic spectators.

"Well?" said McNab.

Stover looked wisely at McCarthy, flirting the cigar between his careless fingers.

"Not bad."

"Rather good bouquet," said McCarthy, who knew no more than Stover.

"Let's begin at eight dollars and stick at ten," said Dink.

At that latter price, despite the openly expressed scorn of the American allies of the struggle for Cuban independence, Stover received a box of one hundred finest Havana cigars — fit for a museum, as McNab repeated — and saw the advance guard of the liberators disappear.

"Dink, it's a shame," said McCarthy gleefully. "Finest cigars I ever smoked."

They shook hands and Stover, overcome by the look of pain he had seen in the eyes of the patriots on their final surrender at ten dollars, said, with a patriotic remorse:

"Poor devils! Think what they're fighting for! If I hadn't been so lavish to-day, I'd have given them the full price."

"I feel sort of bad about it myself."

About ten o'clock they rose by a common impulse and, seeking out the cigars with caressing fingers, indulged in another smoke.

"Dink, this is certainly living," said McCarthy, reclining in that position which his favorite magazine artist ascribed to men of the world when indulging in extravagant desires.

"Pretty high rolling, old geezer."

"I like this better than the first one."

"Of course with a well-seasoned rare old cigar you don't get all the beauty of it right at first."

"By George, if those chocolate patriots would come around again I'd give 'em the four plunks."

"I should feel like it," said Dink, who made a distinction.

The next morning being Sunday, they lolled deliciously in bed, and rose with difficulty at ten.

"Of course I don't believe in smoking before breakfast, as a general rule," said McCarthy in striped red and blue pajamas, "but I have such a fond feeling for Cuba."

"I can hardly believe it's true," said Dink, emerging from the covers like an impressionistic dawn. "Smoke up."

"How is it this morning?"

"Wonderful."

"Better and better."

"I could dream away my life on it."

"We ought to have bought more."

"Too bad."

After chapel, while pursuing their studies in comparative literature in the Sunday newspapers, they smoked again.

"Well?" said Stover anxiously.

"Well?"

"Marvellous, isn't it?"

"Exquisite."

"Only ten cents apiece!"

"It's the way to buy cigars."

"Trouble is, Dink, old highroller, it's going to be an awful wrench getting down to earth again. We'll hate anything ordinary, anything cheap."

"Yes, Tough, we are ruining our future happiness."

"And how good one of the little beauties will taste after that brutalizing Sunday dinner."

"I can hardly wait. By the way, I blew myself to a few glad rags," said Dink, bringing out his purchases, "I rather fancy them. How do they strike you?"

McCarthy emitted a languishing whistle and then his eyes fell on the cause of all the trouble.

"Keeroogalum! Where did you get the pea-soup?"

The expression did not please. However, Stover had still in the matter of his sentimental inclinations a certain bashfulness. So he said dishonestly:

"I had 'em throw it in for a lark."

"Why, the cows would leave the farm."

"Rats. Wait and see," said Dink, who seized the excuse to don the green shirt.

When Stover's blond locks were seen struggling through the collar McCarthy exploded:

"It looks like you were coming out of a tree. What the deuce has happened to you? Are you going out for class beauty? Holy cats! the socks, the socks!"

"The socks, you Reuben, should match the shirt," said Stover, completing his toilet under a diplomatic assumption of persiflage.

"Well, you are a lovely thing," said McCarthy, when the new collar and the selected necktie had transformed

Stover. "Lovely! lovely! you should go out and have the girls fondle you."

At this moment Bob Story arrived, as fate would have it, with an invitation to dinner at his home.

"Sis is back with a few charmers from Farmington and they're crazy to meet you."

"Oh, I say," said Stover in sudden alarm. "I'm the limit on the fussing question."

"Yes, he is," said McCarthy maliciously. "Why, they fall down before him and beg him to step on them."

"You shut up," said Stover, with wrath in his eye.

"Why, Bob, look at him, isn't he gotten up just to charm and delight? You'll have to put a fence around him to keep them off."

"In an hour," said Story, making for the door. "Hunter and Hungerford are coming."

"Hold up."

"Delighted you're coming."

"I say —"

"There's a Miss Sparkes — just crazy about you. You're in luck. Remember the name — Miss Sparkes."

"Story — Bob, come back here!"

"Au reservoir!"

"I can't go — I won't —" But here Dink, leaning over the banister, heard a gleeful laugh float up and the sudden banging of the door.

He rushed back frantically to the room and craned out the window, to see Bob Story sliding around the corner with his fingers spread in a gesture that is never anything but insulting. He closed the window violently and returned to the center of the room.

"Damn!"

"Pooh!" said McCarthy, chuckling with delight.

"Petticoats!"

"Alas!"

"A lot of silly, yapping, gushing, fluffy, giggling, tee-heeing, tittering, languishing, vapid, useless —"

"My boy, immense! Go on!"

"Confound Bob Story, why the deuce did he rope me into this? I loathe females."

"And one just dotes on you," said McCarthy, with the expression of a Cheshire cat.

"I won't go," said Stover loudly.

"Are you going in that green symphony?"

"Why not?"

In the midst of this quarrel, Joe Hungerford entered, with a solemn face.

"You're going to this massacre at Story's?"

"Don't I look like it?" said Dink crossly.

"We'll go over together then," said Hungerford, with a sigh of relief.

"I say, help yourself to a cigar, Joe," said McCarthy, with the air of a Maecenas.

"*Cuba Libre?*" said Hungerford, approaching the box.

"And *à bas* Spain!"

Hungerford examined the cigars with a certain amount of caution which was not lost on the room-mates.

"How many of these have you smoked?" he asked, turning to them with interest.

"Oh, about three apiece."

"How do you like 'em?"

"Wonderful!" said Dink loudly.

"Wonderful!" said McCarthy.

The three lit up simultaneously.

"What did you pay for yours?" said Hungerford, with a sort of inward concentration on the flavor.

"Ten bright silver ones."

"I paid twenty-five for two. How do they taste?"

"Wonderful!"

"Troutman only paid seven-fifty for his box."

"What!"

"And Hunter only five."

"Five dollars?" said McCarthy, with a foreboding.

"But what I can't understand is this —"

"What?"

"Dopey McNab got a box at two-fifty."

A sudden silence fell on the room, while, reflectively, each puffed forth quick, questioning volumes of smoke.

"How do they smoke?" said Hungerford again.

"Wonderful!" said McCarthy, hoping against hope.

"They're not!" said Dink firmly.

He rose, went to the window, and cast forth the malodorous thing. Hungerford followed suit. McCarthy, proud as the Old Guard, sat smoking on; only one leg was drawn up under the other in a tense, convulsive way.

"They were wonderful last night," he said obstinately.

"They certainly were."

"And they were wonderful this morning."

"Not quite so wonderful."

"I like 'em still."

"And Dopey McNab bought a hundred at two-fifty."

This was too much for McCarthy. He surrendered.

Dopey McNab, at this favorable conjunction, sidled into the room with his box under his arm and the face of a boy soprano on duty.

"I say, fellows, I've got a little proposition to make."

A sort of dull, rolling murmur went around the room which he did not notice.

"I find I've been cracking my bank account — the fact is, I'm strapped as a mule and have got to raise enough to pay my wash bill."

"Wash bill, Dopey?" said McCarthy softly.

"We must wash," said Dopey firmly. "To resume. As I detest, abhor, and likewise shrink from borrowing from friends—"

"Repeat that," said Joe Hungerford.

"I will not. But for all of which reasons, I have a little bargain to propose. Here is a box of the finest cigars ever struck the place."

"A full box?"

"Only three cigars out."

"Three!" said Hungerford with a significant look at Stover.

"I could sell them on the campus for twenty, easy."

"But you love your friends," said Stover, moving a little, so as to shut off the retreat.

"Who will give me seven-fifty for it?" said McNab, with the air of one filling a beggar with ecstasy.

"Seven-fifty. You'll let it go at seven-fifty, Dopey?" said McCarthy faintly, paralyzed at such duplicity.

"I will."

"Dopey," said Dink, with a signal to the others, "what is the exact figure of that wash bill of yours?"

"Two dollars and sixty-two cents."

"Will you take two dollars and sixty-two cents for it?"

"You're fooling."

"I am very, very serious."

McNab struck a pose, while over his face was seen the conflict of duty and avarice.

"Take it," he said at last, in a glow of virtue.

"I didn't say I wanted it."

"You didn't!"

"I only wanted to know what you'd really take."

"What's this mean?" said McNab indignantly.

"Dopey, would you sacrifice it at just a little less?" said Hungerford.

But here McNab, suddenly smelling danger in the air, made a spring backwards. Hungerford, who was on guard, caught him.

"Put him in the chair and tie him," said Stover, savagely.

Which was done.

"I say, look here, what are you going to do with me?" said McNab, fiercely.

"You're going to sit there and smoke a couple of those museum cigars, for our delectation and amusement."

"Assassins!"

"Two cigars."

"Never! I'll starve to death first!"

"All right. Keep on sitting there."

"But this is a crime! Police!"

"There are other crimes, Dopey."

"Hold up," said McNab, frantically, as he perceived the cigar being prepared. "I've got to dine over at the Story's at one o'clock."

"So have we," said Hungerford, "but McCarthy will watch you for us."

"I will," said McCarthy, licking his chops.

"I've got to be there," said McNab, wriggling in a frenzy.

"Smoke right up, then. You can smoke them in twenty minutes."

"Police!"

"I say, Dink," said Hungerford, as McNab's head whipped from side to side like a recalcitrant child's. "Perhaps we'd better get in all the crowd who fell for the cigars — round 'em up."

"I'll smoke it," said McNab instantly.

"I thought you would."

They sat around, unfeelingly, grinning, while McNab, strapped in like a papoose, rebelliously, with much sputtering and coughing, smoked the cigar that Dink fed him like a trained nurse.

"Fellows, I've got to get to that dinner."

"We know that, Dopey — but there's one thing you won't do there — tell the story of the *Cuba libre* cigar."

"Say, let me off and I'll put you on to a great stunt."

"We can't be bought."

"I'll tell you, I'll trust you! We're going to have a cop-killing over in Freshman row. We've got a whole depot of Roman candles. Let me off this second cigar and I'll work you in."

"We'll be there!"

"You bandits, I'll get even with you."

"You probably will, Dopey, but you'll never rob us of this memory."

"Curse you, feed it to me quickly."

The cigar consumed to the last rebellious puff, McNab was released in a terrific humor, and departed hastily to dress, after remarking in a deadly manner:

"I'll get you yet — you brutal kidnappers."

"I think it's a rather low trick of Bob Story's," said Stover, considering surreptitiously in the mirror the effect of his new color scheme.

"Ditto here," said Hungerford.

Now Stover was in a quandary. He was divided between two emotions. He firmly thought that he had never looked so transcendingly the perfect man of fashion, but he had numerous busy doubts as to whether the exquisite costume was as appropriate at a quiet Sunday dinner as it undoubtedly would have been in a sporting audience. Still, to make a change now, under the mali-

cious inspection of Tough McCarthy, would be to invite a storm of joyful ridicule, so he said hopefully:

"Think it all right to go in this?"

"Why not?"

As this put the burden of the proof on him, Stover remained silent, but compromised a little by exchanging a rather forward vest for one of calmer aspect.

"Well," he said, at last, with something between a gulp and a sigh, "I suppose we'd better push along."

"I suppose so," said Hungerford, who brought a strangle hold to bear on his necktie and shot a last look down at the slightly wavering line of his trousers.

At the door, the vision of McNab, like a visiting English duke, bore down upon them.

"Where in the thunder did you get the boutonnière?" said Stover, examining him critically.

"Why, Dopey, you're a dude!" said Hungerford disapprovingly.

"Everything is correct — brilliant, but correct," said McNab with a flip of his fingers. "Come on now — we're late."

Half way there, when the conversation had completely fizzled out, McNab said cheerily:

"How d'ye feel? Getting a little nervous, eh? Getting cold feelings up and down your back? Fingers twitching — what?"

"Don't be an ass," said Hungerford huskily.

"Chump," said Stover, feeling all at once the tightness of his vest.

"'Course you know, boys, you're dressed all wrong — in shocking taste. You know that, don't you? Thought I'd better tell you before the girls begin giggling at you."

"Huh!"

"Joe's bad enough in a liver-colored sack, but Dink's unspeakable!"

"I am! What's wrong?"

"Fancy wearing a colored shirt — and such a color! You're gotten up for a boating party — not for a formal lunch. You're unspeakable, Dink, unspeakable! Look at me. I'm a delight — black and white, immaculate, impressive, and absolutely correct."

By this time they had reached the steps.

"Now, don't try to shine your shoes on your trousers. It always shows. Don't stumble or trip when you go in. Don't bump against the furniture. Don't stutter. Don't hold on to your hostess to keep from falling over. And don't, *don't* shoot your cuffs."

McNab's malicious advice reduced Hungerford to a panic, while only the consciousness of his public importance prevented Stover from bolting as he saw McNab press the button.

"Stand up straight and keep your hands out of your pockets."

"Dopey, I'll wring your neck if you don't stop!"

"Ditto."

"Say something interesting to every girl," continued McNab, in a solemn whisper. "Talk about art or literature."

The door opened, and they stumbled into the anteroom, from which escape was impossible.

"Dink," said McNab in a last whisper.

"What?"

"Don't ask twice for soup, and stop shooting that cuff."

The next moment Stover, who had been thrust forward by the other two, found himself crossing the perilous track of slippery rugs on slippery floors, and suddenly the cynosure of at least a hundred eyes.

Judge Story had him by the hand, patting him on the back, smiling up at him with a smile he never forgot — a little lithe man bristling with good humor and the genius of good cheer.

"Stover, I'm glad to shake your hand. We did all we could for you in those last rushes. We rooted hard. My wife assaulted a clergyman in front of her, and my daughter was found afterward weeping with her arms around the man next to her. I certainly am proud to shake your hand. I won't shake it too long, because"— here he looked up in a confidential whisper —"because the girls have been fidgeting at the window for an hour. Look them over and tell me which one you want to sit next to you, and I'll fix it."

"Dad, aren't you awful?" said a voice in only laughing disapproval.

"My daughter," said the judge, passing joyfully on to Hungerford.

"Indeed, I'm very glad to meet you."

He shook hands, a trifle embarrassed, with a young lady of quiet self-possession, gentle in voice and action, with somewhat of the thoughtful reserve of her brother.

He followed her, only half conscious of a certain floating grace and the pleasure of following her movements, bowing with cataleptic bobs of his head as the introductions ran on:

"Miss Sparkes."

"Miss Green."

"Miss Woostelle."

"Miss Raymond."

Then he straightened and allowed his chin to right itself over the brink of his mounting collar, smiling, but without hearing the outburst that went up from the equally agitated sex:

"Isn't the Judge perfectly terrible!"

"You mustn't believe a word he says."

"Don't you think he's lovely, though?"

"We really were so excited at the game."

"Oh, dear, I almost cried my eyes out."

"We thought you were perfectly splendid."

"We did want you to score so."

"I just hated those Princeton men, they were so much bigger."

Hungerford and McNab coming up for presentation, he found himself a little to leeward, clinging to a chair, and, opening his eyes, perceived for the first time Hunter, with whom he shook hands with the convulsiveness of a death grip.

Miss Sparkes, a rather fluttering brunette with dimples and enthusiastic eyes, cut off his retreat and isolated him in a corner, where he was forced to listen to a disquisition on the theory of football, supremely conscious that the unforgiving McNab was making him a subject of conversation with the young lady to whom he was rapidly succumbing.

The entrance of Mrs. Story and Bob, and the welcome descent on the dining-room, for a moment made him forget the awful fact that he had perceived, on his entrance, that the green shirt was, in fact, nothing short of a social outrage.

"Every one sitting next to the person they want," said the Judge roguishly, his glance rolling around the table. "By George, if that body-snatcher of a Miss Sparkes hasn't bagged Stover — well, I never! Seems to me a certain party named Hungerford has done very well indeed. McNab, I perceive, is going to set the fashions for the class, but I certainly do like Stover's green shirt."

At this a shout went up, and Stover's ears began to boil.

"I don't see what you're ha-ha-ing about, Mr. McNab," continued the Judge, diverting the attack, "descending upon us, a quiet, respectable back-woods family, with a boutonnière! I think that's putting on a good deal of airs, don't you? Now, boys, don't let these young society ladies from Farmington pretend they're too delicate to eat. You ought to see the breakfast they devoured. Everybody happy all right."

In five minutes all were at ease, chattering away like so many magpies. Stover, finding that his breath came easier, recovered himself and listened with a tolerant sense of pleasure while Miss Sparkes rushed on.

"The girls up at Farmington will be so excited when they hear I've actually sat next to you at the table. You know, we're all just crazy about football. Oh, it gets me so excited! Dudley's the new captain, isn't he? I met him last summer at a dance down at Long Island. I admire him tremendously, don't you? He has such a *strong* character."

He nodded from time to time, replied in dignified monosyllables, and became pleasurably aware that Miss Raymond, opposite, in disloyalty to her companion, had one ear trained to catch his slightest word, while Miss Green and Miss Woostelle, farther away, watched him covertly over the foliage of the celery. He was a lion among ladies for the first time — a sensation he had sworn to loathe and detest; and yet there was in him a sort of warm growing feeling that he could not explain but that was quite far from unpleasant.

"If Miss Sparkes, Mr. Stover, will stop whispering in your ear for just a moment," said the Judge, on mischief bent, "you can help Mrs. Story with the beef."

"You'll get accustomed to him soon," said his hostess, smiling. "There, if you'll steady the platter I think we

two can manage it. I am so glad to have you here. Bob has spoken of you so often. I hope you'll be good friends."

There was something leonine and yet very feminine in her face, a quiet and restfulness that drew him irresistibly to her and gave him the secret of the reserve and charm that was in her children.

Of all the delegation from school, Jean Story alone had not seemed aware of his imposing stature. She was sitting between Hungerford and Hunter, whom she called by his first name, and her way of speaking, unlike the impulsiveness of her companions, was measured and thoughtful. She had a quantity of ash-colored hair which, like her dress, seemed to be floating about her. Her forehead was clear, a little serious, and her eyes, while devoid of coquetry, held him with their directness and simplicity.

He found himself only half hearing the conversation that Miss Sparkes rolled into his ear, watching the movements of other hands, feeling a little antagonism to Hunter and wondering how long they had known each other.

Dinner over, he forgot his shyness, and went up to her with the quick direction which was impulsive in him when he was strongly interested.

"I want to talk to you," he said.

"Yes?"

She looked at him, a little surprised at the bluntness of his introduction, but not displeased.

"You are very like your brother," he said. She seemed younger than he had thought.

"I am glad of that," she answered, with a genuine smile. "Bob and I are old friends."

"I hope you'll be my friend," he said.

She turned, and then, seeing in his face only sincerity, nodded her head slightly and said:

"Thank you."

He said very little more, ill at ease, a feeling that also seemed to have gained possession of her.

Miss Raymond and Miss Woostelle came up, and he found himself restored to the rôle of a hero, a little piqued at Miss Story's different attitude, always aware of her movements, hearing her low voice through all the chatter of the room.

He went home very thoughtful, keeping out of the laughing discussion that went on, watching from the corner of his eye Hunter, and wondering with a little unexplained resentment just how well he knew the Storys.

CHAPTER XIII

WITH Stover's return after the Christmas vacation the full significance of the society dominion burst over him. The night that the hold-offs were to be given, there was a little joking at the club table, but it was only lip-deep. The crisis was too vital. Chris Schley and Troutman, who were none too confident, were plainly nervous.

Stover and McCarthy walked home directly to their rooms, and took up the next day's lessons as a convenient method of killing time.

"You're not worrying?" said Stover suddenly.

McCarthy put down the penitential book, and, rising, stretched himself, nervously resorting to his pipe.

"Not for a hold-off — no. That ought to be all right."

"And afterward?"

"Don't speak about it."

"Rats! You'll be pledged about the eighth or tenth."

"What time is it?" said McCarthy shortly.

"Five minutes more."

This time each took up his book in order to be found in an inconsequential attitude, outwardly indifferent, as all Anglo-Saxons should be. From without, the hour rang its dull, leaden, measured tones. Almost immediately a knock sounded on the door, and Le Baron appeared, hurried, businesslike, mysterious, saying:

"Stover, want to see you in the other room a moment."

Dink retired with him into the bedroom, and received his hold-off in a few matter-of-fact sentences. A second

after, Le Baron was out of the door, rushing down the steps.

"Your turn next," said Stover, with a wave of his hand to McCarthy.

"Yes."

The sound of hurrying feet and the shudder of hastily banged doors filled the house.

"My, they're having a busy time of it," said Stover.

"Yes."

Ten minutes passed. McCarthy, staring at his page, mechanically took up the dictionary, hiding the fear that started up. Stover rose, going to the window.

"They're running around Pierson Hall like a lot of ants," he said, drumming against the window.

"How far's this advance go?" said McCarthy in a matter-of-fact tone.

"End of page 152," said Stover. He came back frowning, glancing at the clock. It was seventeen minutes after the hour.

All at once, outside, came a clatter of feet, and the door opened on Waring, out of breath and flustered.

"McCarthy, like to see you a moment."

Stover returned to the window, gazing out. Presently behind his back he heard the two return, the door bang, and McCarthy's voice saying:

"It's all right, Dink."

"All right?" he said.

"Yes."

"Glad of it."

"He gave me a little scare, though."

"Your crowd lost a couple of men; besides, you give more hold-offs."

"That's it."

They abandoned the subject by mutual consent; only

Stover remembered for months after the tension he had felt and the tugging at the heart-strings. If he could feel that way for his friend, what would be his sensations when he faced his own crisis on Tap Day?

Fellows from other houses came thronging in with reports of how the class had divided up. Every one had his own list of the hold-offs, completing it according to the last returns, amid a bedlam of questions.

"How did Story go?"

"Did Schley get a hold-off?"

"Yes, but Troutman didn't."

"He did, too."

"When?"

"Half an hour late."

"Brockhurst got one."

"You don't say so!"

"Gimbel get anythin'?"

"No."

"Regan?"

"Don't know."

"Any one know about Regan?"

"No."

"How about Buck Waters?"

"I don't know. I think not."

"Damned shame."

"What, is Buck left out?"

"'Fraid so."

"What's wrong?"

"Too much sense of humor."

Stover, off at one side, watched the group, seeing the interested calculation as each scanned his own list, wondering who would have to be eliminated if he were to be chosen. Story, Tommy Bain, and Hunter were in his crowd, as he had foreseen.

He went out and across the campus to South Middle, where Regan was now rooming. By the Coöp he found Bob Story, and together they went up the creaky stairs. Regan was out — just where, the man who roomed on his entry did not know.

"How long has he been out?" said Story anxiously.

"Ever since supper."

"Didn't he come in at all?"

"No."

"Were they going to give him a hold-off?" said Stover, as they went down.

"Yes. They've been looking everywhere for him."

"I don't think the old boy would take it."

"Can't you make him see what it would mean to him?"

"I've tried."

"I'm afraid Regan's queered himself with a lot of our crowd," said Story thoughtfully. "They don't understand him and he doesn't want to understand them. Didn't he know this was the night?"

"Yes; I told him."

"Stayed away on purpose?"

"Probably."

"Too bad. He's just the sort of man we ought to have."

"How do you feel about the whole proposition?" said Stover curiously.

"The sophomore society question?" said Story frankly. "Why, I think there've got to be some reforms made; they ought to be kept more democratic."

"You think that?"

"Yes; I think we want to keep away a good deal from the social admiration game — be representative of the real things in Yale life; that's why we need a man like Regan. Course, I think this — that we've all got too

much this society idea in our heads; but, since they exist it's better to do what we can to make them representative and not snobbish."

Stover was surprised at the maturity of judgment in the young fellow, as well as his simplicity of expression. He would have liked to talk to him further on deeper subjects, but, as always, the first steps were difficult and as yet he accepted things without a clear understanding of reasons.

He went up with Story for a little chat. There was about the room a tone of quiet good taste and thoughtfulness quite different from the boyish exuberance of other rooms. The pictures were Braunotypes of paintings he did not know, while bits of plaster casts mellowed with wax enlivened the serried contents of the book-shelves.

"You've got a lot of books," said Stover, feeling his way.

"Yes. Drop in and borrow them any time you want."

While Story flung a couple of cushions on the state arm-chair and brought out the tobacco, Dink examined the shelves respectfully, surprised and impressed by the quality of the titles, French, German, and Russian.

"Why do you room alone, Bob?" he said, with some curiosity, knowing Story's popularity.

"I wanted to." Story was opposite, his face blocked out in sudden shadows from the standing lamp, that accentuated a certain wistful, pensive quality it had. "I enjoy being by myself. It gives me time to think and look around me."

"Are you going out for anything?" said Stover, wondering a little at the impression Story had made already, through nothing but the charm and sincerity of his character.

"Yes, I'm going out for the *News* next month, and besides I'm heeling the *Lit.*"

"Oh, you are?" said Stover, surprised.

"But it comes hard," said Story, with a grimace. "I have to work like sin over every line. It's all hammered out. Brockhurst is the fellow who can do the stuff."

"Do you know him at all?"

"He won't let any one know him. I've tried. I don't think he quite knows yet how to meet fellows. I'm sorry. He really interests me."

"That's a good photo of your sister," said Stover, who had held the question in leash ever since his entrance.

"So, so."

"How much longer has she at Farmington?"

"Last year."

"Going abroad afterwards?" said Stover carelessly.

"No, indeed. Stay right here."

"I like her," said Stover. "It's quite a privilege to know her."

Story looked up and a pleased smile came to him.

"Yes, it is," he said.

"Bob, what do you think about McCarthy's chances?"

Story considered a moment.

"Only fair," he said.

"Why, what's wrong with him?"

"He hasn't any one ahead pulling for him," said Story, "and most of the other fellows have. That's one fault we have."

"It would knock him out to miss."

"It is tough."

They spoke a little more in a desultory way, and Stover left. He was dissatisfied. He wanted Story to like him, conscious of a new longing in himself for the friendships that did not come, and yet somehow he could find no com-

mon ground of conversation. Moreover, and he rather resented it, there was not in Story the least trace of the admiration and reverence that he was accustomed to receive, as a leader should receive.

The following weeks were ones of intrigue and nervous speculation. Pledged among the first, he found himself with Hunter, Story, and Tommy Bain in the position of adviser as to the selection of the rest of his crowd. Hunter and Bain, each with an object in view, sought to enlist his aid. He perceived their intentions, not duped by the new cordiality, growing more and more antagonistic to their businesslike ambitions. With Joe Hungerford and Bob Story he found his real friends. And yet, what completely surprised him was the lack of careless, indolent camaraderie which he had known at school and had expected in larger scope at college. Every one was busy, working with a dogged persistence along some line of ambition. The long, lazy afternoons and pleasant evenings were not there. Instead was the grinding of the mills and the turning of the wheels. How it was with the rest he ignored; but with his own crowd — the chosen — life was earnest, disciplined in a set purpose. He felt it in the open afternoon, in the quiet passage of candidates for the baseball teams, the track, and the crew; in the evenings, in the strumming of instruments from Alumni Hall and the practising of musical organizations, and most of all in the flitting, breathless passage of the *News* heelers — in snow or sleet, running in and out of buildings, frantically chasing down a tip, haggard with the long-drawn-out struggle now ending the fourth month.

He himself had surrendered again to this compelling activity and gone over to the gymnasium, taking his place at the oars in the churning tanks, bending methodically as the bare torso of the man in front bent or shot back, con-

centrating all his faculties on the shouted words of advice from the pacing coach above him.

He was too light to win in the competition of unusual material — he could only hope for a second or third substitute at best; but that was what counted, he said to himself, what made competition in the class and brought others out, just as it did in football. And so he stuck to his grind, satisfied, on the whole, that his afternoons were mapped out for him.

Meanwhile the pledges to the sophomore societies continued and the field began to narrow. McCarthy's hold-off was renewed each time, but the election did not arrive.

In his own crowd Story, Hungerford, and himself found themselves in earnest alliance for the election of Regan and Brockhurst. Regan, however, had so antagonized certain members of their sophomore crowd that their task was well-nigh impossible. He had been pronounced "fresh," equivalent almost to a ban of excommunication, for his extraordinary lack of reverence to things that traditionally should be revered, and as he had a blunt, direct way of showing in his eyes what he liked and disliked, his sterling qualities were forgotten in the irritation he caused. Besides, as the opening narrowed to three or four vacancies, Hunter and Bain, in the service of their own friends, arrayed themselves in silent opposition to him and to Brockhurst.

About the latter, Stover found himself increasingly unable to make up his mind. He went to see him once or twice, but the visit was never returned. In his infallibility — for infallibility is a requisite of a leader — he decided that there was something queer about him. He rather shunned others, took long walks by himself, in a crowd always seemed removed, watching others with a distant eye which had in it a little mockery. His room

was always in confusion, as was his tousled hair. In a word, he was a little of a barbarian, who did not speak the ready lip language that was current in social gatherings, and, unfortunately, did not show well his paces when confronted with inspection. So when the final vote came Stover, infallible judge of human nature, conscientiously decided that Brockhurst did not rank with the exceedingly choice crowd of which he was a leader.

With the arrival of the elections for the managerships of the four big athletic organizations, positions in the past disputed by the candidacies of the three sophomore societies, a revolution took place. The non-society element, organized by Gimbel and other insurgents ahead of him, put up a candidate for the football managership and elected him by an overwhelming majority, and repeated their success with the Navy.

The second victory was like the throwing down of a gauntlet. The class, which had been quietly dividing since the advent of the hold-offs, definitely split, and for the first time Stover became aware of the soundness of the opposition to the social system of which he was a prospective leader. Quite to his surprise, Jim Hunter appeared in his room one night.

"What the deuce does he want now?" he thought to himself, wondering if he were to be again solicited in favor of Stone, who was still short of election.

"I say, Dink, we're up against a serious row," said Hunter, making himself comfortable and speaking always in the same unvarying tone. "The class is split to pieces."

"It looks that way."

"It's all Gimbel and that crowd of soreheads he runs. We had trouble with him up at Andover."

"Well, Jim, what do you think about the whole propo-

sition?" said Stover. "The college seems pretty strong against us."

"It's just a couple of men who are cooking it up to work themselves into office," said Hunter, dismissing the idea lightly. "You'll see, that's all there is to it."

Somehow, Stover found that renewed contest with Hunter only increased the feeling of antagonism he had felt from the first. He was aware of a growing resistance to Hunter's point of view, guarded and deliberate as it was. So he said point blank:

"I'm not so sure there isn't some basis for the feeling. We ought to watch out and make ourselves as democratic as possible."

"My dear fellow," said Hunter, in the tone of amused worldliness, "these anti-society fights go on everywhere. There was a great hullabaloo six or seven years ago, and then it all died out. You'll see, that's what'll happen. Gimbel'll get what he wants, then he'll quiet down and hope to make a senior society. Don't get too excited over things that happen in freshman year."

"Have you talked with Story?" said Stover, resenting his tone.

"Bob's got a curious twist — he's a good deal of a dreamer."

"Then you wouldn't make any changes?"

"No, not in our crowd," said Hunter. "I think we do very well what we set out to get — the representative men of the class, to bring them together into close friendship, and make them understand one another's point of view and so work together for the best in the university."

"You think the outsiders don't count?"

"As a rule, no. Of course, there are one or two men who develop later, but if there's anything in them they'll really make good."

"Rather tough work, won't it be?"

"Yes; but every system has its faults."

"What did you come in to see me about?" said Stover abruptly.

"To talk the situation over," said Hunter, not seeming to perceive the hostility of the question. "I think all of us in the crowd ought to be very careful."

"About what?"

"About talking too much."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean, if you have any criticism on the system, keep it to yourself. Gimbel is raising enough trouble; the only thing is for us to shut up and not encourage them by making the kickers think that any of us agree with them."

"So that's what you came in to say to me?"

"Yes."

"You're for no compromise."

"I am."

"Are there fellows in our crowd, or the classes ahead, who feel as Story does?"

"Yes; of course there are a few."

"And, Hunter, you see no faults in the system?"

"What other system would you suggest?"

Now, Stover had not yet come to a critical analysis of his own good fortune, nor had he any more than a personal antagonism for Hunter himself. He did not answer, unwilling to let this feeling color his views on what he began to perceive might some day shape itself as a test of his courage.

Hunter left presently, as he had come up, without enthusiasm, always cold, always deliberate. When he had gone, Stover became a little angry at the advice so

openly imposed on him, and as a result he decided on a sudden move.

If the split in the class was acute, something ought to be done. If Hunter, as a leader, was resolved on contemptuous isolation, he would do a bigger thing in a bigger way.

In pursuance of this idea, he suddenly set out to find Gimbel and provoke a frank discussion. If anything could be done to hold the class together and stop the rise of political dissension, it was his duty as a responsible leader to do what he could to prevent it.

When he reached the room, it was crowded, and an excited discussion was going on, which dropped suddenly on his entrance. What the subject of conversation was he had a shrewd suspicion, seeing several representatives from Sheff.

"Hello, Stover. Come right in. Glad to see you." Gimbel, a little puzzled at this first visit, came forward cordially. "You know every one here, don't you? Jackson, shake hands with Stover. What'll you have, pipe or cigarette?"

Stover nodded to the fellows whom he knew on slight acquaintance, settled in an arm-chair, brought forth his pipe, and said with assumed carelessness:

"What was all the pow-wow about when I arrived?"

A certain embarrassment stirred in the room, but Gimbel, smiling at the question, said frankly:

"We were fixing up a combination for the baseball managership. We are going to lick you fellows to a scramble. That's what you've come over to talk about, isn't it?"

"Yes."

The crowd, plainly disconcerted at this smiling passage

of arms, began to melt away with hastily formed excuses.

"Quite a meeting-place, Gimbel, you have here," said Stover, nodding to the last disappearing group.

"Politicians should have," replied Gimbel, straddling a chair, and, leaning his arms on the back, he added, smiling: "Well, fire away."

Each had grown in authority since their first meeting on the opening of college, nor was the question of war or peace yet decided between them.

"Gimbel, I hope we can talk this thing over openly."

"I think we can."

"I'm doing an unusual thing in coming to you. You're a power in this class."

"And you represent the other side," said Gimbel. "Go on."

"You're going to run a candidate for the baseball managership."

"I'm not running him, but I'm making the combination for this class."

"Same thing."

"Just about."

"Are you fellows going to shut out every society man that goes up for a class election?"

"You're putting a pretty direct question."

"Answer it if you want to."

"Yes, I'll answer it." Gimbel looked at him, plainly concerned in emulating his frankness, and continued: "Stover, this anti-sophomore society fight is a fight to the finish. We are going to put up an outsider, as you call it, for every election, and we're going to elect him."

"Why?"

"Because we are serving notice that we are against a system that is political and undemocratic."

"What good'll it do?"

"We'll abolish the whole system."

"Do you really believe that?" said Stover, strangely enough, adopting Hunter's attitude.

"I do; I may know the feeling in the upper classes better than you do."

"Gimbel, how much of this is real opposition and how much is worked up by you and others?"

"My dear Stover, why ask who is responsible? Ask if the opposition is genuine and whether it's going to stick."

"I don't believe it is."

"That's not it. What you want to know is how much is conviction in me, and how much is just the fun of running things and stirring up mischief."

"That does puzzle me — yes. But what I want *you* to see is, you're splitting up the class."

"I'm not doing it, and you're not doing it. It's the class ahead that's interfering and doing it. Now, Stover, I've answered your questions. Will you answer mine?"

"That's fair."

"If you put up a candidate, why shouldn't we?"

"But you make politics out of it."

"Do you ever support the candidate of another crowd?"

Stover was silent.

"Stover, do you know that for years these elections have gone on with just three candidates offered, one each from your three sophomore societies? And how have they been run? By putting up your lame ducks."

"Oh, come."

"Not always. But if you think you can elect a weak member instead of a strong one, you trot out the lame duck. Why? Because at the bottom you are not really

social, but political; because your main object is to get as many of your men into senior societies as you can."

"Well, why not?"

"Because you're doing it at the expense of the class — by making us bolster up the weak ones with an office."

"I don't think that's entirely fair."

"You'll see. Look at the last candidates the sophomores put up. You haven't answered my questions. Why shouldn't we non-society men, six-sevenths of the class, have the right to put up our candidates and elect them?"

"You have," said Stover; "but, Gimbel, you're not doing it for that. You're doing it to knock us out."

"Quite true."

"That means the whole class goes to smash — that we're going to have nothing but fights and hard feelings from now on. Is that what you want?"

"Stover, it's a bigger thing than just the peace of mind of our class."

"But what is your objection to us?" said Stover.

"My objection is that just that class feeling and harmony you spoke of your societies have already destroyed."

"In what way?"

"Because you break in and take little groups out of the body of the class and herd together."

"You exaggerate."

"Oh, no, I don't; and you'll see it more next year. You've formed your crowd, and you'll stick together and you'll all do everything you can to help each other along. That's natural. But don't come and say to me that we fellows are dividing the class."

"Rats, Gimbel! Just because I'm in a soph isn't going to make any difference with the men I see."

"You think so?" said Gimbel, looking at him with real curiosity.

"You bet it won't."

"Wait and see."

"That's too ridiculous!"

Stover, feeling his anger gaining possession of him, rose abruptly.

"How can it be otherwise?" said Gimbel, persisting. "Next year the only outsiders you'll see will be a few bootlickers who'll attach themselves to you to get pulled into a junior society. The real men won't go with you, because they don't want to kowtow and heel."

"We'll see."

"I say, Stover," said Gimbel abruptly, as Dink, for fear of losing his temper, was leaving. "Now, be square. You've come to me frankly — I won't say impertinently — and I've answered your questions and told you openly what we're going to do. Give me credit for that, will you?"

"I don't believe in you," said Stover, facing him.

"I know you don't," said Gimbel, flushing a little, "but you will before you get through."

"I doubt it."

"And I'll tell you another thing you'll do before this sophomore society fight is ended," said Gimbel, with a sudden heat.

"What?"

"You'll stand on the right side — where we stand."

"You think so?"

"I know it!"

CHAPTER XIV

WHEN a freshman has been invited to dinner and in a rash moment accepted the invitation and lived through the agony, he usually pays his party call (always supposing that he has imbibed a certain amount of home etiquette) sometime before graduation. In the balance of freshman year the obligation possesses him like a specter of remorse; in sophomore year he remembers it by fits and starts, always in the middle of the week, in time to forget it by Sunday; in junior year he is tempted once or twice to use it as an excuse for sporting his newly won high hat and frock-coat, but fears he has offended too deeply; and in senior year he watches the local society columns for departures, and rushes around to deposit his cards, with an expression of surprise and regret when informed at the door that the family is away.

Dink Stover temporized, confronted with the awful ordeal of arraying himself in his Sunday prison garb and stiffly traversing the long, tricky, rug-strewn hall of the Story's, with the chance of suddenly showing his whole person to a dozen inquisitive eyes. He let the first Sunday pass without a qualm, as being too unnecessarily close and familiar. On the second Sunday he decided to wait until he had received the suit made of goods purchased at a miraculous bargain from the unsuspecting Yankee drummer. The third Sunday he completely forgot his duties as a man of fashion. On the fourth Sunday, in a panic, he bound his neck in a shackling high collar,

donned his new suit, which looked as lovely as everything that is new and untried can look, and went post-haste in search of Hungerford as a companion in misery and a post to which to cling. To his horror, Hungerford had paid his visit, and felt very doubtful as to the propriety of repeating it before having been again fed.

Dink returned for McNab or Hunter as the lesser of two evils. They were both out. Being in stiff and circumstantial attire, the afternoon was manifestly lost. With a sort of desperate hope for some miraculous evasion, he set out laggingly for the Story mansion, revolving different plans.

"I might leave a card at the door," he thought to himself, "and tell the girl that my room-mate was desperately ill — that I had just run in for a moment because I wanted them to know, to know — to know what?"

The idea expired noiselessly. He likewise rejected the idea of stalking the door Indian fashion, and slipping the card under the crack as if he had rung and not been heard.

"After all, they might be out," he thought at last, hopefully. "I'll just go by quietly and see if I can hear anything."

But at the moment when he came abreast the steps a carriage drove up, the door opened, and Judge Story and his wife came down. Stover came to a balky stop, hastily snatching away his derby.

"Why, bless me if it isn't Mr. Stover," said the Judge instantly. "Dressed to kill, too. Never expected to see you until I went around myself, with an injunction. How did you screw up your courage?"

Mrs. Story came to his rescue, smiling a little at his tell-tale face.

"Don't stop on my account," said Stover, very much embarrassed. "It's a beautiful day for a ride, beautiful."

"Oh, you are not going to get off as easily as that," said the Judge, delighted. "My daughter Jean is inside watching you from behind the curtains. Go right up and entertain her with some side-splitting stories. Besides, Miss Kelly is there with some important top-heavy junior who thinks he's making an awful hit with her. Go in and steal her right away from him."

The maid stood at the open door. There was nothing to do but to toil up the penal steps, heart in mouth.

"Is Miss Story in?" he said in a lugubrious voice. "Will you present her with this card?"

"Step right into the parlor, sah. You'll find Miss Jean there," said the colored maid, with no feeling at all for his suffering.

He caught a fleeting, unreassuring glimpse of himself in a dark mirror, successfully negotiated the sliding rugs, and all at once found himself somehow in the cheery parlor alone with Miss Story, shaking hands.

"Miss Kelly is here?" he said, perfunctorily stalking to a chair.

"No, indeed."

"Why your father said—"

"That was only his way—he's a dreadful tease."

Stover drew a more quiet breath, and even relaxed into a smile.

"He had me all primed up for a junior, at least."

"Isn't Dad dreadful! That's why you came in with such overpowering dignity?"

Stover laughed, a little pleased that his entrance could be so described, and, shifting to a less painfully con-

tracted position, sought anxiously for some brilliant opening that would make the conversation a distinguished success.

Now, although he still retained his invincible determination to keep his faith from women, he had during certain pleasant episodes of the last vacation condescended to listen politely to the not disagreeable adoration of a score of hero-worshiping young ladies still languishing in boarding-schools. He had learned the trick of such conversations, exchanged photographs with the laudable intention of making his rooms more like an art gallery than ever, and carried off as mementos such articles as fans, handkerchiefs, flowers, etc.

But, somehow, the stock phrases were out of place here. He tried one or two openings, and then relapsed, watching her as she took up the conversation easily and ran on. Ever since their first meeting the charming silhouette of the young girl had been in his mind. He watched her as she rose once or twice to cross the room, and her movements had the same gentle rhythm that mystified him in her voice. Yet he was conscious of a certain antagonism. His vanity, perhaps, was a little stirred. She was not flattered in the least by his attentions, which in itself was an incredible thing. There was about her not the slightest suggestion of coquetry — in fact, not more than a polite uninterested attitude toward a guest. And, perceiving this all at once, a desire came to him to force from her some recognition.

"You are very much like Bob," he said abruptly, "you are very hard to know."

"Really?"

"I really want to know your brother, but I can't. I don't think he likes me," he said.

"I don't think Bob knows you," she said carefully, raising her eyes in a little surprise. "You're right; we both take a long time to make up our minds."

"Then what I said is true?" he persisted.

She looked at him a moment, as if wondering how frank she might be, and said after a little deliberation:

"I think he's in a little doubt about you."

"In doubt," said the prospective captain of a Yale eleven, vastly amazed. "How?"

"You will succeed; I am sure of that."

"Well, what then?" he said, wondering what other standard could be applied.

"I wonder how *real* you will be in your success," she said, looking at him steadily.

"You think I am calculating and cold about it," he said, insisting.

She nodded her head, and then corrected herself.

"I think you are in danger of it — being entirely absorbed in yourself — not much to give to others — that's what I mean."

"By George," said Dink, open-mouthed, "you are the strangest person I ever met in my life!"

She colored a little at this, and said hastily:

"I beg your pardon; I didn't realize what I was saying."

"You may be right, too." He rose and walked a little, thinking it over. He stopped suddenly and turned to her. "Why do you think I'm not 'real'?"

"I don't believe you have begun to think yet."

"Why not?"

"Because — well, because you are too popular, too successful. It's all come too easily. You've had nothing to test you. There's nothing so much alike as the successful men here."

"You are very old for your years," he said, plainly annoyed.

"No; I listen. Bob and Dad say the same thing."

"You know, I wanted you to be my friend," he said, suddenly brushing aside the conversation. "You remember?"

"I should like to be your friend," she said quietly.

"If I turn out as you want."

"Certainly."

He seized an early opportunity to leave, furious at what (not understanding that the instincts of a first antagonism in a young girl are sometimes evidence of a growing interest) he felt was her indifference. He did not go directly to his rooms, but struck out for a brisk walk up the avenue.

"What the deuce does she think I'm going to turn out?" he said to himself, with some irritation. "Turn out? Absurd! Haven't I done everything I should do? I've only been here a year, and I stand for something. By George, I'd like to know how many men get where I've gotten the first year." Looking back over the year, he was quickly reassured on this vital point. "If she thinks I'm calculating, how about Hunter? He's the original cold fish," he said. "Yes, what about him? Absurd. She just said that to provoke me." He sought in his mind some epithet adequate to such impertinence, and declared: "She's young — that's it; she's *quite* young."

Suddenly he thought of Regan, who had intruded his shadow across the path of his personal ambition. Had he really been honest about Regan? Could he not have made him see the advantages of belonging to a sophomore society, if he had really tried? Whereupon Mr. Dink Stover began a long, victorious debate with his conscience,

one of those soul-satisfying arguments that always end one way, as conscience is a singularly poor debater when pitted against a resourceful mind.

"Heavens! haven't I been the best friend he's had?" he concluded. "Perhaps I might have talked more to him about the sophomore question, but then, I know I never could have changed him. So what's the odds? I'm democratic and liberal. Didn't I go to Gimbel and have it out? I can see the other side, too. What the deuce, then, did she mean?"

After another long period of furious tramping, he answered this vexing question in the following irrelevant way: "By George, what an extraordinary girl she is! I must go around again and talk with her. She brushes me up."

And around he did go, not once, but several times. The first little antagonism between them gradually wore away, and yet he was aware of a certain defensive attitude in her, a judgment that was reserved; and as, by the perfected averaging system of college, he had lost in one short year all the originality and imagination he had brought with him, he was quite at a loss to understand what she found lacking in so important and successful a personage as Mr. John Humperdink Stover.

Naturally, he felt that he was in love. This extraordinary passion came to him in the most sudden and convincing manner. He corresponded, with much physical and mental agony, with what is called a dashing brunette, with whom he had danced eleven dances out of a possible sixteen on the occasion of a house-party in the Christmas vacation, on the strength of which they had exchanged photographs and simulated a confidential correspondence. He had done this because he had plainly perceived it was the thing for a man to do, as one watches the crease

in the trousers or exposes a vest a little more daring than the rest. It gave him a sort of reputation among lady-killers that was not distasteful. At Easter he had annexed a blonde, who wrote effusive rolling scrawls and used a noticeable crest. He had done this, likewise, because he wished to be known as a destructive force, as one who rather allowed himself to be loved. But he found the manual labor too taxing. He was cruel and abrupt to the blonde, but he consoled himself by saying to himself that he had restored to the little girl her peace of mind.

On Sunday evening, then, according to tacit agreement, after a pipe had been smoked and the fifth Sunday newspaper had been searched for the third time, McCarthy stretched himself like a cat and said:

"Well, I guess I'll dash off a few heart-throbs to the dear little things."

"That reminds me," said Stover, with an obvious loudness. He took out the last heliotrope envelop and read over the contents which had pleased him so much on the preceding Tuesday. Somehow, it had a different ring — a little too flippant, too facile.

"What the deuce am I going to write her?" he said, inciting his hair to rebellion. He cleaned the pen, and then the ink-well, and wrote on the envelop:

Miss Anita Laurence

It was a name that had particularly attracted him, it was so Spanish and suggestive of serenades. He wrote again at the top of the page:

"Dear Anita."

Then he stopped.

"What the deuce can I say now?" he repeated crossly.

"By George, I've only seen her five times. What is there to say?"

He rose, went to his bureau, and took up the photograph of honor and looked at it long. It was a pretty face, but the ears were rather large. Then he went back, and, tearing up what he had written, closed his desk.

"Hello," said McCarthy, who was in difficulties. "Aren't you going to write Anita?"

"I wrote her last night," said Stover with justifiable mendacity. "I was writing home, but feel rather sleepy."

As this was unchallengeable, he went to his room and stretched out on the delicious bed.

"I wonder if I'm falling in love with Jean Story?" he said hopefully. "I'm sick to death of Anita calling me by my front name and writing as she does. I'll bet I'm not the only one, either!" This sublimely ingenious suspicion sufficed for the demise of the dashing brunette from whom he had forced eleven dances out of a possible sixteen. "Jean Story is so different. What the deuce does she want changed in me? I wonder if I could get Bob to give me a bid for a visit this summer?"

The opening to the imagination being thus provided, he went wandering over summer meadows with a certain slender girl who moved as no one else moved and in a dreamy landscape showed him the most marked preference. In the midst of a most delightful and thoroughly satisfactory conversation he fell asleep. When he woke he went straight to his bureau, and, removing the photograph of Anita, consigned it to a humble position in the study amid the crowded beauties that McCarthy termed the harem.

During first recitation, which was an inconsequential voyage into Greece, his imagination jumped the black-

boarded walls and went wandering into the realm of the possible summer. A week on the river at the oars, however, drove from him all such imaginings; but at times the vexing question returned, and each Sunday, somehow, he found an opportunity to drop in and have a long talk with Judge Story, of whom he grew surprisingly fond.

The period of duns now set in, and the house on York Street became a place of mystery and signals. McNab, naturally, was the most sought, and he took up a sort of migratory abode on Stover's window-seat, disappearing under the flaps at the slightest sound in the corridor. Stover himself began to feel the possibilities of vistas and the sense of lurking shadows. He was utterly disappointed in the material for a suit which he had bought from the unsuspecting Yankee. It had a yielding characteristic way about it that brought the most surprising baggings and stretchings, and he had a suspicion that it was pining away and fading in the sun. By the time the tailor's bill had been presented (not paid), the suit might have been on the fashion account of a prince. Then there were little notes, polite but insistent, from the haberdasher's whence the glowing green shirt, now sadly yellowed, had come. In order to make a show of settling, he went over to Commons to eat, and, being on an allowance for clothes, economized on such articles of apparel as were visible only to himself and McCarthy, who was in the same threadbare state.

His candidacy for the class crew kept him in strict training, though he ranked no better than third substitute. His afternoons thus employed and his evenings occupied with consultations, he found his life as narrowed as it had been in the season of football. Every one knew him, and he had learned the trick of a smile and an enthusiastic

bob of the head to every one. He was a popular man even among the outsiders now more and more openly opposed to the sophomore society system. He was perhaps, at this period, the most popular man in his class; and yet, he had made scarcely a friend, nor did he understand quite what was the longing in him.

With the end of May and the coming of society week for the first time the full intensity and seriousness of the social ambition was brought before him. The last elections in his own crowd were given out, Regan and Brockhurst failing to be chosen. In McCarthy's society the last place narrowed down to three men; and Stone, who had made the *News*, won the choice.

Stover was sitting alone with McCarthy on the critical night, when the door opened and Stone entered. One look at his face told McCarthy what had happened.

"I'm sorry, Tough," said Stone, a little over-tense. "They gave me the pledge. It's hard luck."

"Bully for you!" There wasn't a break in McCarthy's voice. "I knew you'd get it all along."

"I came up to let you know right away," said Stone, looking down at the floor. "Of course, I wanted it myself, but I'm sorry — deuced sorry."

"Nonsense. You've made the *News*. You ought to have it." McCarthy, calm and smiling, held out his hand. "Bully for you! Shake on it!"

Stone went almost immediately and the room-mates were left alone. McCarthy came back whistling, and irrelevantly went to his bureau, parting his hair with methodical strokes of the brush.

"That was real white of Stone to come up and tell me," he said quietly.

"Yes."

"Well, we'll go on with that geometry now."

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He came back and sat down at the desk quite calmly, as if a whole outlook had not been suddenly closed to him.

Stover, cut to the heart, watched him with a genuine thrill. He rose, drew a long breath, walked to the window, and, coming back, laid his hand on his room-mate's shoulder.

McCarthy looked up quickly, with a little flush.

"Good grit, old man," said Dink, "darned good grit."

"Thank you."

"It won't make any difference, Tough."

"Of course not." McCarthy gave a little laugh and said: "Don't say any more, Dink."

Stover took his place opposite, saying:

"I won't, only this. You take it better than I could do. I'm proud of you."

"You remember what the old man said to you fellows after that Princeton slaughter?" said Tough solemnly. "'Take your medicine.' Well, Dink, I'm going to swallow it without a wink, and I rather guess, from what I've seen, that's the biggest thing they have to teach us up here."

"It'll make no difference," said Dink obstinately.

"Of course not."

But each knew that for McCarthy, who would never be above the substitute class, the issue of the senior society was settled, once and for all.

The excitement of being initiated, the outward manifestation of Calcium Light Night and the spectacular parade of the cowled junior societies with their swelling marching songs, and the sudden arrival of Tap Day for a while drove from Stover all thoughts but his personal dreams.

On the fateful Thursday in May, shortly after half

past four, he and Tough went over to the campus. By the fence the junior class, already swallowed up by the curious body of the college, were waiting the arrival of the senior elections which would begin on the stroke of five.

"Lots of others will take their medicine to-day," said McCarthy a little grimly.

"You bet."

Hungerford and McNab, seeing them, came over.

"Gee, look at the way the visitors are on the campus," said McNab.

"They're packed in all the windows of Durfee and over on the steps of Dwight Hall," said Hungerford. "I didn't know they came on like this."

"If you want a sensation," said McNab, "just go over to that bunch of juniors. You can hear every one of them breathe. They're scared to death. It's a regular slaughter."

Stover looked curiously at McNab, amazed to note the excitement on his usually flippant countenance. Then he looked over at the herd huddled under the trees by the fence. It was all a spectacle still — dramatic, but removed from his own personality. The juniors, with but a few exceptions, were only names to him. His own society men meant something, and Captain Dudley of next year's eleven, who, of course, was absolutely sure. He felt a little thrill as he looked over and saw the churning mass and thought that in two years he would stand there and wait. But, for the moment, he was only eagerly curious and a little inclined to be amused at the excessive solemnity of the performance.

"Who do you think will be first tapped for Bones?" said McNab, at his side.

"Dudley," said Hungerford.

"No; they'll keep him for the last place."

"Well, Allison, captain of the crew, then."

"I heard Smithson has switched over to Keys."

"They're both after De Gollyer."

All four had tentative lists in their hands, eagerly comparing them.

"Dopey, you're all wrong. Clark'll never get it."

"Why not."

"Look at your Bones list — there's no place for him. You've got to include the pitcher of the nine and the president of Dwight Hall, haven't you?"

"My guess is Rogers first man for Keys."

"No; they'll take some man Bones wants — De Gollyer, probably."

"Let's get into the crowd."

"Come on."

"It's ten minutes of five already."

Le Baron, passing, stopped Stover, saying excitedly:

"Say, Dink, watch out for the crowd who go Keys and let me know, will you? I mean the men in our crowd?"

"Sure I will."

Stover was in the throng, with a strange, sharp memory of Le Baron's drawn face. It was a silent mass, waiting, watch in hand, trying stoically to face down the suspense of the last awful minutes. Men he knew stared past him unseeing. Some were carefully dressed, and others stood in sweater and jersey, biting on pipes that were not lit. He heard a few scattered voices and the brief, crisp remarks came to him like the scattered popping of musketry.

"What's the time, Bill?"

"Three minutes of."

"Did they ever make a mistake?"

"Sure; four years ago. A fellow got mixed up and tapped the wrong man."

"Didn't discover it until they were half way down the campus."

"Rotten situation."

"I should say so."

"Let's stand over here."

"What for?"

"Let's see Dudley tapped. He'll be first man for Bones."

"Gee, what a mob!"

"Packed like sardines."

Near the fence, the juniors, hemmed in, were constantly being welded together. Stover, moving aimlessly, caught sight of Dudley's face. He would have liked to signal him a greeting, a look of good will; but the face of the captain was set in stone. A voice near him whispered that there was a minute more. He looked in a dozen faces, amazed at the physical agony he saw in those who were counted surest. For the first time he began to realize the importance of it, the hopes and fears assembled there. Then he noticed, above the ghost-like heads of the crowd, the windows packed with spectators drawn to the spectacle. And he had a feeling of indignant resentment that outsiders should be there to watch this test of manhood after the long months of striving.

"Ten seconds, nine seconds, eight," some one said near him. Then suddenly, immediately swallowed up in a roar, the first iron note of the chapel bell crashed over them. Then a shriek:

"Yea!"

"There he comes!"

"Over by the library."

"First man."

Across the campus, Dana, first man out for Bones, all in black, was making straight for them with the unrelenting directness of a torpedo. The same breathless tensity was in his face, the same solemnity. The crowd parted slightly before him and then closed behind him with a rush. He made his way furiously into the center of the tangle, throwing the crowd from him without distinction until opposite Dudley, who waited, looking at him blankly. He passed, and suddenly, seizing a man nearer Stover, swung him around and slapped him on the back with a loud slap, crying:

"Go to your room!"

Instantly the cry went up:

"It's De Gollyer!"

"First man tapped!"

The mass parted, and De Gollyer, wabbling a little, taking enormous steps, shot out for his dormitory, tracked by Dana, while about him his classmates shouted their approval of the popular choice.

"Yea!"

"Rogers!"

"First man for Keys."

"Rogers for Keys!"

Stover set out for a rush in the direction of the shout, tossed and buffeted in the scramble. At every moment, now, a cry went up as the elections proceeded rapidly. From time to time he found Le Baron, and shouted to him his report. He saw men he knew tearing back and forth, Hunter driven out of his pose of calm for once, little Schley, hysterical almost, running to and fro. At times the slap was given near him, and he caught the sudden realization, a look in the face that was not good to have seen. It was all like a stampede, some panic, a sudden shipwreck, when every second was precious and,

once gone, gone forever; where the agony was in the face of the weak-hearted and a few stoically stood smiling at the waiting gulf.

The elections began to be exhausted and the writing on the wall to stare some in the face. Then something happened; a cry went up and a little circle formed under one of the trees, while back came the rumor:

"Some one's fainted."

"Man's gone under."

"Who?"

"Who is it?"

"Franklin."

"No, no; Henderson."

"You don't say so!"

"Fainted dead away. Missed out for Bones."

All at once another shout went up — a shout of amazement and incredulity. A great sensation spread everywhere. The Bones list had now reached thirteen; only two more to be given, and Allison of the crew, Dudley, and Harvey, chairman of the *News,* all rated sure men, were left. Who was to be rejected? Stover fought his way to where the three were standing white and silent, surrounded by the gaping crowd. Some one caught his arm. It was Le Baron, beside himself with excitement, saying:

"Good God, Dink! you don't suppose they're going to turn down Harvey or Allison?"

Almost before the words were uttered something had happened. A slap resounded and the sharp command:

"Go to your room!"

Then the cry:

"Harvey!"

"Harvey's tapped!"

"Only one place left."

"Good heavens!"

"Who's to go down?"

"It's impossible!"

Dudley and Allison, prospective captains, room-mates from school days at Andover, were left, and between them balancing the fates. A hush fell in the crowd, awed at the unusual spectacle of a Yale captain marked for rejection. Then Dudley, smiling, put out his hand and said in a clear voice:

"Joe, one of us has got to walk the plank. Here's luck!"

Allison's hand went out in a firm grip, smiling a little, too, as he answered:

"No, no; you're all right! You're sure."

"Here he is."

"Last man for Bones."

"Here he comes!"

The crowd massed at the critical point fell back, opening a lane to where Allison and Dudley waited, throwing back their shoulders a little, to meet the man who came straight to them, pale with the importance of the decision that had been given him. He reached Dudley, passed, and, seizing Allison by the shoulder, almost knocked him down by the force of his slap. Pandemonium broke loose:

"It's Allison!"

"No!"

"Yes."

"What, they've left out Dudley?"

"Missed out."

"Impossible!"

"Fact."

"Hi, Jack, Dudley's missed out!"

"Dudley, the football captain!"

"What the devil!"

"For the love of heaven!"

"Why, Dudley's the best in the world!"

"Sure he is."

"It's a shame."

"An outrage."

"They've done it just to show they're independent."

Across the campus toward Vanderbilt, Allison and the last Bones man, in tandem, were streaking like water insects. Le Baron, holding on to Stover, was cursing in broken accents. But Dink heard him only indistinctly; he was looking at Dudley. The pallor had left his face, which was a little flushed; the head was thrown back proudly; and the lips were set in a smile that answered the torrent of sympathy and regret that was shouted to him. The last elections to Keys and Wolf's-Head were forgotten in the stir of the incredible rejection.

Then some one shrieked out for a cheer, and the roar went over the campus again and again.

Dudley, always with the same smile and shining eyes, made his way slowly across toward Vanderbilt, hugged, patted on the back, his hand wrung frantically by those who swarmed about him. Stover was at his side, everything forgotten but the drama of the moment, cheering and shouting, seeing with a sort of wonder a little spectacled grind with blazing eyes shaking hands with Dudley, crying:

"It's a crime — a darned crime! We all think so, all of us!"

For half an hour the college, moved as it had never been, stood huddled below Dudley's rooms, cheering itself hoarse. Then slowly the crowd began to melt away.

"Come on, Dink," said Hungerford, who had him by the arm.

"Oh, is that you, Joe?" said Dink, seeing him for the first time. "Isn't it an outrage?"

"I don't understand it."

"By George, wasn't he fine, though?"

"He certainly was!"

"I was right by him. He never flinched a second."

"Dink, the whole thing is terrible," said Hungerford, his sensitive face showing the pain of the emotions he had undergone. "I don't think it's right to put fellows through such a test as that."

"You don't believe in Tap Day?"

"I don't know."

Their paths crossed Regan's and they halted, each wondering what that unusual character had thought of it all.

"Hello, Tom."

"Hello, Joe; hello, Dink."

"Tough about Dudley, isn't it?"

"How so?"

"Why, missing out!"

"Perhaps it's Bones's loss," said Regan grimly. "Dudley's all right. He's lucky. He's ten times the man he was this morning."

Neither Hungerford nor Stover answered.

"What do you think of it — Tap Day?" said Hungerford, after a moment.

"The best thing in the whole society system," said Regan, with extra warmth.

"Well, I'll be darned!" said Stover, in genuine surprise. "I thought you'd be for abolishing it."

"Never! If you're going through three years afraid to call your souls your own, why, you ought to stand out before every one and take what's coming to you. That's my idea."

He bobbed his head and went on toward Commons.

"I don't know," said Hungerford solemnly. "It's a horror; I wish I hadn't seen it."

"I'm glad I did," said Stover slowly. "They certainly baptize us in fire up here." He remembered McCarthy with a new understanding and repeated: "We certainly learn how to take our medicine up here, Joe. It's a good deal to learn."

They wandered back toward the now quiet fence. All the crowding and the stirring was gone, and over all a strange silence, the silence of exhaustion. The year was over; what would come afterward was inconsequential.

"I wonder if it's all worth it?" said Hungerford suddenly.

Stover did not answer; it was the question that was in his own thoughts. What he had seen that afternoon was still too vivid in his memory. He tried to shake it off, but, with the obsession of a fetish, it clung to him. He understood now, not that he would yield to the emotion, but the fear of judgment that swayed men he knew, and what Regan had meant when he had referred to those who did not dare to call their souls their own.

"It does get you," he said, at last, to Hungerford.

"It does me," said Hungerford frankly, "and I suppose it'll get worse."

"I wonder?"

He was silent, thinking of the year that had passed, wondering if the next would bring him the same discipline and the same fatigue, and if at the end of the three years' grind, if such should be his lot, he could stand up like Dudley before the whole college and take his medicine with a smile.

CHAPTER XV

WHEN Stover returned after the summer vacation to the full glory of a sophomore, he had changed in many ways. The consciousness of success had given him certain confidence and authority, which, if it was more of the manner than real, nevertheless was noticeable. He had aged five or six years, as one ages at that time under the grave responsibilities of an exalted leadership.

A great change likewise had come in his plans. During the summer Tough McCarthy's father had died, and Tough had been forced to forego his college course and take up at once the seriousness of life. Several offers had been made Dink to go in with Hungerford, Tommy Bain, and others of his crowd, but he had decided to room by himself, for a time at least. The decision had come to him as the result of a growing feeling of restlessness, an instinctive desire to be by himself and know again that shy friend Dink Stover, who somehow seemed to have slipped away from him.

Much to his surprise, this feeling of restlessness dominated all other emotions on his victorious return to college. He felt strangely alone. Every one in the class greeted him with rushing enthusiasm, inquired critically of his weight and condition, and passed on. His progress across the campus was halted at every moment by acclaiming groups, who ran to him, pumping his hand, slapping him on the back, exclaiming:

"You, old Dink Stover!"

"Bless your heart."
"Put it there."
"Glad to see you again."
"How are you?"
"You look fit as a fiddle!"
"The All-American this year!"
"Hard luck about McCarthy."
"Ta-ta."

His was the popular welcome, and yet it left him unsatisfied, with a strange tugging at his heart. They were all acquaintances, nothing more. He went to his room on the second floor in Lawrence, and, finding his way over the bare floor and the boxes that encumbered, reached the window and flung it open.

Below the different fences had disappeared under the joyful, hilarious groups that swarmed about them. He saw Swazey and Pike, two of the grinds of his own class, men who "didn't count," go past hugging each other, and their joy, comical though it was, hurt him. He turned from the window, saying aloud, sternly, as though commanding himself:

"Come, I must get this hole fixed up. It's gloomy as the devil."

He worked feverishly, ripping apart the covers, ranging the furniture, laying the rugs. Then he put in order his bedroom, and, whistling loudly, fished out his bedclothes, laid the bed, and arranged his bureau-top. That done, he brought forth several photographs he had taken in the brief visit he had paid the Storys, and placing them in the position of honor lit his pipe and, camping on a dry-goods box, like Scipio amid the ruins of Carthage, dreamily considered through the smoke-wreaths the distant snap-shots of a slender girl in white.

He was comfortably, satisfactorily in love with Jean

Story. The emotion filled a sentimental want in his nature. He had never asked her for her photograph or to correspond, as he would have lightly asked a hundred other girls. He knew instinctively that she would have refused. He liked that in her — her dignity and her reserve. He wanted her regard, as he always wanted what others found difficult to attain. She was young and yet with an old head on her shoulders. In the two weeks he had spent in camp, they had discussed much together of what lay ahead beyond the confines of college life. He did not always understand her point of view. He often wondered what was the doubt that lay in her mind about him. For, though she had given him a measure of her friendship, there was always a reserve, something held back. It was the same with Bob. It puzzled him; it irritated him. He was resolved to beat down that barrier, to shatter it some way and somehow, as he was resolved that Jim Hunter, whose intentions were clear, should never beat him out in this race.

He rose, pipe in mouth, and, taking up a photograph, stared at the laughing face and the quiet, proud tilt of the head.

"At any rate," he said to himself, "Jim Hunter hasn't got any more than this, and he never will."

He went back to the study, delving into the packing-boxes. From below came a stentorian halloo he knew well:

"Oh, Dink Stover, stick out your head!"

"Come up, you, Tom Regan, come up on the jump!"

In another moment Regan was in the room, and his great bear clutch brought Stover a feeling of warmth with its genuineness.

"Bigger than ever, Tom."

"You look fine yourself, you little bantam!"

"Lord, but I'm glad to see you!"

"Same to you."

"How'd the summer go?"

"Wonderful. I've got four hundred tucked away in the bank."

"You don't say so!"

"Fact."

Stover shook hands again eagerly.

"Tell me all about it."

"Sure. Go on with your unpacking; I'll lend a hand. I've had a bully summer."

"What's that mean?" said Stover, with a quizzical smile. "Working like a slave?"

"No, no; seeing real people. I tried being a conductor a while, got in a strike, and switched over to construction work. Got to be foreman of a gang, night shift."

"You don't mean out all night?"

"Oh, I slept in the day. You get used to it. They're a strange lot, the fellows who work while the rest of you sleep. They brushed me up a lot, taught me a lot. Wish you'd been along. You'd have got some education."

"I may do something of the sort with you next summer," said Stover quietly.

"They tell me Tough McCarthy's not coming back."

"Yes; father died."

"Too bad. Going to room alone?"

"For a while. I want to get away — think things over a bit, read some."

"Good idea," said Regan, with one of his sharp appraising looks. "If a man's given a thinker, he might just as well use it."

Hungerford and Bob Story joined them, and the four went down to Mory's to take possession in the name of

the sophomore class. Regan, to their surprise, making one of the party, paid as they paid, with just a touch of conscious pride.

The good resolves that Dink made to himself, under the influence of the acute emotions he had felt on his return, gradually faded from his memory as he felt himself caught up again in the rush of college life. He found his day marked out for him, his companions assigned to him, his standards and his opinions inherited from his predecessors. Insensibly he became a cog in the machine. What with football practise and visiting the freshman class in the interest of his society, he found he was able to keep awake long enough to get a smattering of the next day's work and no more.

The class had scattered and groups with clear tendencies had formed, Hunter and Tommy Bain the center of little camps serious and ambitious, while off the campus in a private dormitory another element was pursuing mannish delights with the least annoyance from the curriculum.

The opposition to the sophomore societies had now grown to a college issue. Protests from the alumni began to come in; one of the editors of the *Lit* made it the subject of his leader, while the college, under the leadership of rebels like Gimbel, arrayed itself in uncompromising opposition and voted down every candidate for office that the sophomore societies placed in the field.

That the situation was serious and working harm to the college Stover saw, but, as the fight became more bitter, the feeling of loyalty, coupled with distrust of the motives of the assailants, placed him in the ranks of the most ardent defenders, where, a little to his surprise, he found himself rather arrayed with Tommy Bain and Jim

Hunter in their position of unrelenting conservatism, fighting the revolt which was making head in the society itself, as Bob Story and Joe Hungerford led the demand for some liberal reform.

However, the conflict did not break out until the close of the season. The team, under the resolute leadership of Captain Dudley, fought its way to one of those almost miraculous successes which is not characteristic of the Yale system as it is the result of the inspiring guidance of some one extraordinary personality.

Regan went from guard to tackle, and Stover, back at his natural position of end, developed the promise of freshman year, acclaimed as the All-American end of the year. Still the possibility of Regan's challenge for the captaincy returned constantly to his mind, for about the big tackle was always a feeling of confidence, of rugged, immovable determination that perhaps in its steadying influence had built up the team more than his own individual brilliancy. Dink, despite himself, felt the force of these masterful qualities, acknowledging them even as, to his displeasure, he felt a rising jealousy; for at the bottom he was drawn more and more to Regan as he was drawn to no other man.

About a month after the triumphant close of the football season, then, Stover, in the usual course of a thoroughly uneventful morning, rose as rebelliously late as usual, bolted his breakfast, and rushed to chapel. He was humanly elated with what the season had brought, a fame which had gone the rounds of the press of the country for unflinching courage and cold head-work, but, more than that, he was pleasantly satisfied with the difficult modesty with which he bore his honors. For he was modest. He had sworn to himself he would be, and he was. He had allowed it to make no difference in

his relations with the rest of the class. If anything, he was more careful to distribute the cordiality of his smile and the good-natured "How are you?" to all alike without the slightest distinction.

"How are you, Bill?" he said to Swazey, the strange unknown grind who sat beside him. He called him by his first name consciously, though he knew him no more than this slight daily contact, because he wished to emphasize the comradeship and democracy of Yale, of which he was a leader. "Feelin' fine this morning, old gazabo?"

"How are you?" said Swazey gratefully.

"Tough lesson they soaked us, didn't they?"

"It was a tough one."

"Suppose that didn't bother you, though, you old valedictorian."

"Oh, yes, it did."

Stover, settling comfortably in his seat, nodded genially to the right and left.

"I say, Dink."

"Hello, what is it?"

"Drop in on me some night."

"What?" said Stover surprised.

"Come round and have a chat sometime," said Swazey, in a thoroughly natural way.

"Why, sure; like to," said Stover bluffly, which, of course, was the only thing to say.

"To-night?"

"Sorry; I'm busy to-night," said Stover. Swazey, of course, being a grind, did not realize the abhorrent, almost sacrilegious, social break he was making in inviting him on his society evening.

"To-morrow, then?"

"Why, yes; to-morrow."

"I haven't been very sociable in not asking you before," said Swazey, in magnificent incomprehension, "but I'd really like to have you."

"Why, thankee."

Stover, entrapped, received the invitation with perfect gravity, although resolved to find some excuse.

But the next day, thinking it over, he said to himself that it really was his duty, and, reflecting how pleased Swazey would be to receive a call from one of his importance, he determined to give him that pleasure. Setting out after supper, he met Bob Story.

"Whither away?" said Story, stopping.

"I'm going to drop in on a fellow called Swazey," said Stover, a little conscious of the virtue of this act. "I sit next to him in chapel. He's a good deal of a grind, but he asked me around, and I thought I'd go. You know — the fellow in our row."

"That's very good of you," said Story, with a smile which he remembered after.

Stover felt so himself. Still, he had the democracy of Yale to preserve, and it was his duty. He went swinging on his way with that warm, glowing, physical delight that, fortunately, the slightest virtuous action is capable of arousing.

With Nathaniel Pike, a classmate, Swazey roomed in Divinity Hall, where, attracted by the cheapness of the rooms, a few of the college had been able to find quarters.

"Queer place," thought Dink to himself, eyeing a few of the divinity students who went slipping by him. "Wonder what the deuce I can talk to him about. Oh, well, I won't have to stay long."

Swazey, of course, being outside the current of college heroes, could have but a limited view. He found the

door at the end of the long corridor and thundered his knock, as a giant announces himself.

"Come in if you're good-looking!" said a piping voice.

Stover entered with strongly accentuated good fellowship, giving his hand with the politician's cordiality.

"How are you, Nat? How are you, Bill?"

He ensconced himself in the generous arm-chair, which bore the trace of many masters, accepted a cigar and said, to put his hosts at their ease:

"Bully quarters you've got here. Blame sight more room than I've got."

Pike, cap on, a pad under his arm, apologized for going.

"Awful sorry, Stover; darned inhospitable. This infernal *News* grind. Hope y'will be sociable and stay till I get back."

"How are you making out?" said Stover, in an encouraging, generous way.

Pike scratched his ear, a large, loose ear, wrinkling up his long, pointed nose in a grimace, as he answered:

"Danged if I don't think I'm going to miss out again."

"You were in the first competition?" said Stover, surprised — for one trial was usually considered equivalent to a thousand years off the purgatory account.

"Yep, but I was green — didn't know the rules."

"Lord, I should think you'd have had enough!"

"Why, it's rather a sociable time. It is a grind, but I'm going to make that *News*, if I hit it all sophomore year."

"What, you'd try again?"

"You bet I would!"

There was a matter-of-fact simplicity about Pike, uncouth as was his dress and wide sombrero, that appealed to Stover. He held out his hand.

"Good luck to you! And say — if I get any news I'll save it for you."

"Obliged, sir — ta-ta!"

"Holy cats!" said Dink, relapsing into the arm-chair as the door banged. "Any one who'll stick at it like that gets all I can give him."

"He's a wonderful person," said Swazey, drawing up his chair and elevating his hobnailed shoes. "Never saw anything like his determination. Wonderful! Green as salad when he first came, ready to tickle Prexy under the ribs or make himself at home whenever a room struck his fancy. But, when he got his eyes open, you ought to have seen him pick up and learn. He's developed wonderfully. He'll succeed in life."

Stover smiled inwardly at this critical assumption on Swazey's part, but he began to be interested. There was something real in both men.

"Did you go to school together?" he said.

"Lord, no! Precious little school either of us got. I ran up against him when I landed here — just bumped together, as it were."

"You don't say so?"

"Fact. It was rather queer. We were both up in the fall trying to throttle a few pesky conditions and slip in. It was just after Greek prose composition — cursed be the memory! — when I came out of Alumni Hall, kicking myself at every step, and found that little rooster engaged in the same process. Say, he was a sight — looked like a chicken had been shipped from St. Louis to Chicago — but spunky as you make 'em. Never had put a collar on his neck — I got him up to that last spring; but he still balks at a derby. So off we went to grub, and I found he didn't know a soul. No more did I. So we said, 'Why not?' And we did. We hunted up

these quarters, and we've got on first-rate ever since. No scratching, gouging, or biting. We've been a good team. I've seen the world, I've got hard sense, and he's got ideas — quite remarkable ideas. Danged if I'm not stuck on the little rooster."

Stover reached out for the tobacco to fill a second pipe, all his curiosity aroused.

"I say, Dink," said Swazey, offering him a match, "this college is a wonderful thing, isn't it?" He stood reflectively, the sputtering light of the match illuminating his thoughtful face. "Just think of the romance in it. Me and Pike coming together from two ends of the country and striking it up. That's what counts up here — the perfect democracy of it!"

"Yes, of course," said Stover in a mechanical way. He was wondering what Swazey would think of the society system, or if he even realized it existed, so he said curiously:

"You keep rather to yourselves, though."

"Oh, I know pretty much what I want to know about men. I've sized 'em up and know what sorts to reach out for when I want them. Now I want to learn something real." He looked at Stover with a sort of rugged superiority in his glance and said: "I've earned my own way ever since I was twelve years old, and some of it was pretty rough going. I know what's outside of this place and what I want to reach. That's what a lot of you fellows don't worry about just now."

"Swazey, tell me about yourself," said Stover, surprised at his own eagerness. "By George, I'd like to hear it! Why did you come to college?"

"It was an idea of the governor's, and he got it pretty well fixed in my head. Would you like to hear? All right." He touched a match to the kindling, and, his

coat bothering him, cast it off. "The old man was a pretty rough customer, I guess — he died when I was twelve; don't know anything about any one else in the family. I don't know just how he picked up his money; we were always moving; but I fancy he was a good deal of a rum hound and that carried him off. He always had a liking for books, and one set idea that I was to be a gentleman, get to college and get educated; so I always kept that same idea in the back of my head, and here I am."

"You said you'd earned your living ever since you were twelve," said Stover, all interest.

"That's so. It's pretty much the usual story. Selling newspapers, drifting around, living on my wits. Only I had a pretty shrewd head on my shoulders, and wherever I went I saw what was going on and I salted it away. I made up my mind I wasn't going to be a fool, but I was going to sit back, take every chance, and win out big. Lord of mercy, though, I've seen some queer corners — done some tough jobs! Up to about fifteen I didn't amount to much. I was a drifter. I've worked my way from Portland, Oregon, to Portland, Maine, stealing rides and hoofing it with tramps. I've scrubbed out bar-rooms in Arizona and Oklahoma, and tended cattle in Kansas City. I sort of got a wandering fit, which is bad business. But each year I tucked away a little more of the long green than the year before, and got a little more of the juice of books. About four years ago, when I was seventeen — I'd saved up a few hundreds — I said to myself:

"'Hold up, look here, if you're ever going to do anything, it's about time now to begin.' So I planted my hoof out in Oklahoma City and I started in to be a useful citizen."

The pipe between Stover's lips had gone out, but he did not heed it. A new life — life itself — was suddenly revealing itself to him; not the guarded existences of his own kind, but the earnest romance of the submerged nine-tenths. As Swazey stopped, he said impulsively, directly:

"By George, Swazey, I envy you!"

"Well, it's taught me to size men up pretty sharply," said Swazey, continuing. "I've seen them in the raw, I've seen them in all sorts of tests. I've sort of got a pretty guess what they'll do or not do. Then, of course, I've had a knack of making money out of what I touch — it's a gift."

"Are you working your way through here?" said Stover. All feeling of patronage was gone; he felt as if a torrent had cleared away the dust and cobwebs of tradition.

"Lord, no," said Swazey, smiling. "Why, boy, I've got a business that's bringing me in between four and five thousand a year — running itself, too."

Stover sat up.

"What!"

"I've got an advertising agency, specialties of all sorts, seven men working under one. I keep in touch every day. Course I could make more if I was right there. But I know what I'm going to do in this world. I've got my ideas for what's coming — big ideas. I'm going to make money hand over fist. That's easy. Now I'm getting an education. Here's the answer to it all."

He drew out of his pocketbook a photograph and passed it over to Stover.

"That's the best in the world; that's the girl that started me and that's the girl I'm going to marry."

Dink took the funny little photograph and gazed at it

with a certain reverence. It was the face of a girl pretty enough, with a straight, proud, reliant look in her eyes that he saw despite the oddity of the clothes and the artificiality of the pose. He handed back the photograph.

"I like her," he said.

"Here *we* are," said Swazey, handing him a tintype.

It was grotesque, as all such pictures are, with its mingled sentimentality and self-consciousness, but Stover did not smile.

"That's the girl I've been working for ever since," said Swazey. "The bravest little person I ever struck, and the squarest. She was waiting in a restaurant when I happened to drop in, standing on her own feet, asking no favor. She's out of that now, thank God! I've sent her off to school."

Dink turned to him with a start, amazed at the matter-of-fact way in which Swazey announced it.

"To school —" he stammered. "*You've* sent *her*."

"Sure. Up to a convent in Montreal. She'll finish there when I finish here."

"Why?" said Stover, too amazed to choose his methods of inquiry.

"Because, my boy, I'm going out to succeed, and I want my wife to know as much as I do and go with me where I go."

The two sat silently, Swazey staring at the tintype with a strange, proud smile, utterly unconscious of the story he had told, Stover overwhelmed as if the doors in a great drama had suddenly swung open to his intruding gaze.

"She's the real student," said Swazey fondly. "She gets it all — all the romance of the big things that have gone on in the past. By George, the time'll come when we'll get over to Greece and Egypt and Rome and see

something of it ourselves." He put the photographs in his pocketbook and rose, standing, legs spread before the fire, talking to himself. "By George, Dink, money isn't what I'm after. I'm going to have that, but the big thing is to know something about everything that's real, and to keep on learning. I've never had anything like these evenings here, browsing around in the good old books, chatting it over with old Pike — he's got imagination. Give me history and biography — that inspires you. Say, I've talked a lot, but you led me on. What's your story?"

"My story?" said Stover solemnly. He thought a moment and then said: "Nothing. It's a blank and I'm a blank. I say, Swazey, give me your hand. I'm proud to know you. And, if you'll let me, I'd like to come over here oftener."

He went from the room, with a sort of empty rage, transformed. Before him all at once had spread out the vision of the nation, of the democracy of lives of striving and of hope. He had listened as a child listens. He went out bewildered and humble. For the first time since he had come to Yale, he had felt something real. His mind and his imagination had been stirred, awakened, hungry, rebellious.

He turned back, glancing from the lights on the campus to the room he had left — a little splotch of mellow meaning on the somber cold walls of Divinity, and then turned into the emblazoned quadrangle of the campus, with its tinkling sounds and feverish, childish ambitions.

"Great heavens! and I went there as a favor," he said. "What under the sky do I know about anything — little conceited ass!"

He went towards his entry and, seeing a light in Bob Story's room, suddenly hallooed.

"Oh, Bob Story, stick out your head."
"Hello, yourself. Who is it?"
"It's me. Dink."
"Come on up."
"No, not to-night."
"What then?"
"Say, Bob, I just wanted you to know one thing."
"What?"
"I'm just a plain damn fool; do you get that?"
"What the deuce?"
"Just a plain damn fool — good-night!"

And he went to his room, locked the door to all visitors, pulled an arm-chair before the fire, and sat staring into it, as solemn as the wide-eyed owls on the casters.

CHAPTER XVI

THE hours that Dink Stover sat puffing his pipe before the yellow-eyed owls that blinked to him from the crackling fireplace were hours of revolution. His imagination, stirred by the recital of Swazey's life, returned to him like some long-lost friend. Sunk back in his familiar arm-chair, his legs extended almost to the reddening logs, his arms braced, he seemed to see through the conjuring clouds of smoke that rose from his pipe the figures of a strange self, the Dink Stover who had fought his way to manhood in the rough tests of boarding-school life, the Dink Stover who had arrived so eagerly, whose imagination had leaped to the swelling masses of that opening night and called for the first cheer in the name of the whole class.

That figure was stranger to him than the stranger in his own entry. Together they sat looking into each other's eyes, in shy recognition, while overhead on every quarter-hour the bell from Battell Chapel announced the march toward midnight. Several times, as he sat plunged in reverie, a knock sounded imperiously on the locked door; but he made no move. Once from the campus below he heard Dopey McNab's gleeful voice mingling with the deep bass of Buck Waters:

"Oh, father and mother pay all the bills,
And we have all the fun.
That's the way we do in college life.
Hooray!"

For a moment the song was choked, and then he heard it ring in triumphant crescendo as the two came up his steps, pounding out the rhythm with enthusiastic feet. Before his door they came to a stop, sang the chorus to a rattling accompaniment of their fists, and exclaimed:

"Oh, Dink Stover, open up!"

Receiving no response, they consulted:

"Why, the geezer isn't in."

"Let's break down the door."

"What right has he to be out?"

"Is there any one else we can annoy around here?"

"Bob Story is in the next entry."

"Lead me to him."

"About face!"

"March!"

"Oh, father and mother pay all the bills,
And we have all the fun:
That's the way we do —"

The sound died out. Upstairs a piano took up the refrain in a thin, syncopated echo. From time to time a door slammed in his entry, or from without the faint halloo:

"Oh, Jimmy, stick out your head."

Dink, shifting, poked another log into place and returned longingly to his reverie. He could not get from his mind what Swazey had told him. His imagination reconstructed the story that had been given in such bare detail, thrilling at the struggle and the drama he perceived back of it. It was all undivined. When he had thought of his classmates, he had thought of them in a matter-of-fact way as lives paralleling his own.

"Wonder what Regan's story is — the whole story?"

''' 'OH, FATHER AND MOTHER PAY ALL THE BILLS, AND WE HAVE ALL THE FUN' ''—*Page 229*.

he thought musingly. "And Pike and all the rest of —" He hesitated, and then added, "— of the fellows who don't count."

He had heard but one life, but that had disclosed the vista of a hundred paths that here in his own class, hidden away, should open on a hundred romances. He felt, with a sudden realization of the emptiness of his own life, a new zest, a desire to go out and seek what he had ignored before.

He left the fire suddenly, dug into his sweater, and flung a great ulster about him. He went out and across the chilly campus to the very steps where he had gone with Le Baron on his first night, drawing up close to the wall for warmth. And again he thought of the other self, the boyish, natural self, the Dink Stover who had first come here.

What had become of him? Of the two selves it was the boy who alone was real, who gave and received in friendship without hesitating or appraising. He recalled all the old schoolmates with their queer nicknames — the Tennessee Shad, Doc MacNooder, the Triumphant Egg-head, and Turkey Reiter. There had been no division there in that spontaneous democracy, and the Dink Stover who had won his way to the top had never sought to isolate himself or curb any natural instinct for skylarking, or sought a reason for a friendship.

"Good Lord!" he said, almost aloud, "in one whole year what have I done? I haven't made one single friend, known what one real man was doing or thinking, done anything I wanted to do, talked out what I wanted to talk, read what I wanted to read, or had time to make the friends I wanted to make. I've been nothing but material — varsity material — society material; I've lost all the imagination I had, and know less than when I

came; and I'm the popular man—'the big man'—in the class! Great! Is it my fault or the fault of things up here?"

Where had it all gone—that fine zest for life, that eagerness to know other lives and other conditions, that readiness for whole-souled comradeship with which he had come to Yale? Where was the pride he had felt in the democracy of the class, when he had swung amid the torches and the cheers past the magic battlements of the college, one in the class, with the feeling in the ranks of a consecrated army gathered from the plains and the mountains, the cities and villages of the nation, consecrated to one another, to four years of mutual understanding that would form an imperishable bond wherever on the face of the globe they should later scatter? And, thinking of all this young imagination that somehow had dried up and withered away, he asked himself again and again:

"Is it my fault?"

Across the campus Buck Waters and Dopey McNab, returning from their marauding expedition, came singing, arm in arm:

"Oh, father and mother pay all the bills,
And we have all the fun.
That's the way we do in college life.
Hooray!"

The two pagans passed without seeing him, gloriously, boyishly happy and defiant, and the rollicking banter recalled in bleak contrast all the stern outlines of the lives of seriousness he had felt for the first time.

At first he revolted at the extremes. Then he considered. Even their life and their point of view was some-

thing unknown. It was true he was only a part of the machine of college, one of the wheels that had to revolve in its appointed groove. He had thought of himself always as one who led, and suddenly he perceived that it was he who followed.

A step sounded by him, and the winking eye of a pipe. Some one unaware of his tenancy approached the steps. Stover, in a flare-up of the tobacco, recognized him.

"Hello, Brockhurst," he said.

"Hello," said the other, hesitating shyly.

"It's Stover," said Dink. "What are you doing this time of night?"

"Oh, I prowl around," said Brockhurst, shifting from one foot to the other.

"Sit down."

"Not disturbing you?"

"Not at all," said Stover, pleased at this moment at the awe he evidently inspired. "I got sort of restless; thought I'd come out here and smoke a pipe. Amusing old spot."

"I like it," said Brockhurst. Then he added tentatively: "You get the feeling of it all."

"Yes, that's so."

They puffed in unison a moment.

"You're hitting up a good pace on that *Lit* competition," said Dink, unconscious of the tone of patronage into which he insensibly fell.

"Pretty good."

"That's right. Keep plugging away."

"Why?" said Brockhurst, with a little aggressiveness.

"Why, you ought to make the chairmanship," said Dink, surprised.

"Why should I?"

"Don't you want to?"

"There are other things I want more."

"What?"

"To go through here as my own master, and do myself some good."

"Hello!"

Stover sat up amazed at hearing from another the thoughts that had been dominant in his own mind; amazed, too, at the trick of association which had put into his own mouth thoughts against which a moment before he had been rebelling.

"That's good horse sense," he said, to open up the conversation. "What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to do the best thing a fellow can do at our age. I'm going to loaf."

"Loaf!" said Dink, startled again, for the word was like treason.

"Just that."

"But you're not doing that. You're out to make the *Lit.* You're heeling something, like all the rest of us," said Stover, who suddenly found himself on the opposite side of the argument, revolting with a last resistance at the too bold statement of his own rebellion.

"I'm not 'heeling' the *Lit,*" said Brockhurst. His shyness disappeared; he spoke energetically, interested in what he was saying. "If I were, I would make the chairmanship without trouble. I'm head and shoulders over the rest here, and I know it. As it is, some persistent grubber who sits down two hours a day, thirty days a month, nine months of the year for the next two years, who will regularly hand in one essay, two stories, a poem, and a handful of portfolios will probably beat me out."

"And you?"

"I? I write when I have something to write, because I love it and because my ambition is to write."

"Still, that's not exactly loafing."

"It is from your point of view, from the college point of view. It isn't what I write that's doing me any good."

"What then?" said Stover, with growing curiosity.

"The browsing around, watching you other fellows, seeing your mistakes."

"Well, what are they?" said Dink, with a certain antagonism.

"Why, Stover, here are four years such as we'll never get again — four years to revel in; and what do you fellows do? Slave as you'll never slave again. Why, you're working harder than a clerk supporting a family!"

"It's a good training."

"For a certain type, yes, but a rather low type. Thank you, I prefer to go my own way, to work out my own ideas rather than accept others'. However, I'm a crank. Any one who thinks differently here must be a crank."

While they were talking the hour of twelve had struck, and presently across the campus came a mysterious line of senior society men, marching silently, two by two, returning to their rooms.

"What do you think of that?" said Stover, with real curiosity.

"That. A colossal mumbo-jumbo that has got every one of you in its grip." He paused a moment and gave a short laugh. "Did you ever stop to think, Stover, that this fetish of society secrecy that is spread all over this Christian, democratic nation is nothing but a return of idol-worship?"

This idea was beyond Stover, and so, not comprehending it, he resented it. He did not reply. Brockhurst, perceiving that he had spoken too frankly, rose.

"Well, I must be turning in," he said. "So long, Stover. You go your way and I'll go mine; some day we'll talk it over — four years out of college."

"The fellow *is* a crank," said Dink, going his way. "Got some ideas, but an extremist. One or two things he said, though, are true. I rather like to get his point of view, but there's a chap who'll never make friends."

And he felt again a sort of resentment, for, after all, Brockhurst was still unplaced according to college standards, and he was Stover, probable captain, one of those rated sure for the highest society honors.

When he awoke the next morning, starting rebelliously from his bed, his head was heavy, and he did not at first remember the emotions of the night, as sleepily struggling through his sweater he ran out of his entry for a hurried cup of coffee. Bob Story hailed him:

"Hold up, you crazy man."

"What's the matter?"

"What the deuce got into you last night?"

"Last night?" said Stover, rubbing his eyes.

"You hauled me out of bed to shout out a lot of crazy nonsense."

"What did I say?" said Dink, trying to open his eyes.

"Nothing new," said Bob maliciously. "You said you were a plain damn fool, and were anxious for me to know it."

"Oh, I remember."

"Well?"

"Well what?"

"Explanations?"

Stover did not feel in the mood; besides, the new ideas

were too big and strange. He wanted time to understand them. So he said:

"Why, Bob, I just woke up, that's all. I'll tell you about it sometime — not now."

"All right," said Story, with a quick look. "Drop in soon."

The following night Stover again went over to Swazey's rooms. It being Saturday, one or two men had dropped in: Ricketts, a down-East Yankee who recited in his divisions, a drawling, shuffling stripling with a lazy, overgrown body and a quick, roving eye; Joe Lake, a short, rolling, fluent Southerner from Texas; and Bud Brown, from a small village in Michigan, one of the class debaters who affected a Websterian deportment.

"I brought my pipe along," said Stover genially. "Got a place left where I can stow myself? Hello, Ricketts. Hello, Lake. Glad to shake your hand, Brown. How's the old *News* getting along, Pike? By the way, I'll give you a story Monday."

"Right in here, sir," said Lake, making room.

A couple of stout logs were roaring in the fireplace, before which, propped up with cushions, the majority of the company were sprawling. Stover took his place, filling his pipe. His arrival brought a little constraint; the conversation, which had been at fever pitch as he stood rapping at the door, dwindled to desultory remarks on inconsequential things.

"Well, I certainly am among the fruits of the class," thought Stover, eyeing the rather shaggy crowd, where sweaters and corduroys predominated and the razor had passed not too frequently.

In the midst of this hesitation, Regan's heavy frame crowded the doorway, accompanied by Brockhurst. Both

were surprised at Stover's unaccustomed presence, Brockhurst looking at him with a little suspicion, Regan shaking his hand with new cordiality.

"Have you, too, joined the debating circle?" he said, crowding into a place by Stover and adjusting the fire with a square-toed boot.

"Debating circle?" said Stover, surprised.

"Why, this is the verbal prize ring of the college," said Regan, laughing. "We settle everything here, from the internal illnesses of the university to the external manifestations of the universe. Pike can tell you everything that is going to happen in the next fifty years, and so can Brocky — only they don't agree. I'm around to get them out of clinches."

"Reckon you get rather heated up yourself, sometimes, Tom," said Lake.

"Oh, I jump in myself when I get tired of listening."

Swazey, Lake, Ricketts, and Brown in one corner installed themselves for a session at the national game, appropriating the lamps, and leaving the region about the fireplace to be lit by occasional gleams from the fitful hickories.

Brockhurst, the champion of individualism, was soon launched on his favorite topic.

"The great fault of the American nation, which is the fault of republics, is the reduction of everything to the average. Our universities are simply the expression of the forces that are operating outside. We are business colleges purely and simply, because we as a nation have only one ideal — the business ideal."

"That's a big statement," said Regan.

"It's true. Twenty years ago we had the ideal of the lawyer, of the doctor, of the statesman, of the gentleman, of the man of letters, of the soldier. Now the lawyer

is simply a supernumerary enlisting under any banner for pay; the doctor is overshadowed by the specialist with his business development of the possibilities of the rich; we have politicians, and politics are deemed impossible for a gentleman; the gentleman cultured, simple, hospitable, and kind, is of the dying generation; the soldier is simply on parade."

"Wow!" said Ricketts, jingling his chips. "They're off."

"Everything has conformed to business, everything has been made to pay. Art is now a respectable career — to whom? To the business man. Why? Because a profession that is paid $3,000 to $5,000 a portrait is no longer an art, but a blamed good business. The man who cooks up his novel according to the weakness of his public sells a hundred thousand copies. Dime novel? No; published by our most conservative publishers — one of our leading citizens. He has found out that scribbling is a new field of business. He has convinced the business man. He has made it pay."

"Three cards," said Swazey's voice. "Well, Brocky, what's your remedy?"

"A smashing war every ten years," said Brockhurst shortly.

"Why, you bloody butcher," said Regan, who did not seize the idea, while from the card-table came the chorus:

"Hooray, Brocky, go it!"

"That's the way!"

"You're in fine form to-night!"

"And why a war?" said Pike, beginning to take notice.

"A war has two positive advantages," said Brockhurst. "It teaches discipline and obedience, which we profoundly need, and it holds up a great ideal, the ideal of

heroism, of sacrifice for an ideal. In times of war young men such as we are are inspired by the figures of military leaders, and their imaginations are stirred to noble desires by the word 'country.' Nowadays what is held up to us? Go out — succeed — make money."

"That's true, a good deal true," said Regan abruptly. "And the only remedy, the only way to fight the business deal, is to interest young men in politics, to make them feel that there are the new battle-fields."

"Now Tom's in it," said Lake, threshing the cards through his fingers. At the card-table the players began to listen, motioning with silent gestures.

"I *am* off," said Regan, bending forward eagerly and striking his fist against his open hand. "That's the one great thing our colleges should stand for; they ought to be great political hotbeds."

"And they're not," said Brockhurst shortly.

"The more's the pity," said Regan. "There I'm with you. They don't represent the nation: they don't represent what the big masses are feeling, fighting, striving for. By George, when I think of the opportunity, of what this place could mean, what it was meant to mean! Why, every year we gather here from every State in the Union a picked lot, with every chance, with a wonderful opportunity to seek out and know what the whole country needs, to be fired with the same great impulses, to go out and fight together —" He stopped clumsily in the midst of a sentence, and flung back his hair, frowning. "Good government, independent thinking, the love of the fight for the right thing ought to begin here — the enthusiasm of it all. Hang it, I can't express it; but the idea is immense, and no one sees it."

"I see it," said Pike. "That's my ambition. I'm

going back; I'm going to own my own newspaper some day, and fight for it."

"But why don't the universities reflect what's out there?" said Regan with a gesture.

"Because, to make it as it should be, and as it was, a live center of political discussion," said Brockhurst, "you've got to give the individual a chance, break through this tyranny of the average, get away from business ideas."

"Just what do you mean when you say we are nothing but a business college?" said Stover, preparing to resist any explanation. He understood imperfectly what Regan was advocating. Politics meant to him a sort of hereditary division; what new forces were at work he completely ignored, though resolved on enlightenment. Brockhurst's attack on the organization of the college was personal, and he felt that his own membership in the sophomore society was aimed at.

"I mean this," said Brockhurst, speaking slowly in the effort to express a difficult thought. "I hope I can make it clear. What would be the natural thing? A man goes to college. He works as he wants to work, he plays as he wants to play, he exercises for the fun of the game, he makes friends where he wants to make them, he is held in by no fear of criticism above, for the class ahead of him has nothing to do with his standing in his own class. Everything he does has the one vital quality: it is spontaneous. That is the flame of youth itself. Now, what really exists?"

As he paused, Stover, unable to find an opening for dissent, observed with interest the attitudes of the listeners: Pike, his pipe forgotten in the hollow of his hand, was staring into the fire, his forehead drawn in

difficult comprehension; Regan was puffing steady, methodical puffs, nodding his head from time to time. In the background Swazey's earnest face was turned in their direction, and the cards, neglected, were moving in a lazy shuffle; Brown, the debater, man of words rather than ideas, was running his fingers nervously through his drooping hair, chafing for the chance to enter the fray; Lake, tilted back, his fat body exaggerated under the swollen rolls of his sweater, from which from time to time he dug out a chip, kept murmuring:

"Perfectly correct, sir; perfectly correct."

Ricketts, without lifting his head, arranged and rearranged his pile of chips, listening with one ear cocked, deriving meanwhile all the profit which could be gained from his companions' divided attention. Two things struck Stover particularly in the group — the rough, unhewn personal exteriors, and the quick, awakened light of enthusiasm on their faces while listening to the expounding of an idea. Brockhurst himself was transformed. All the excessive self-consciousness which irritated and repelled was lost in the fervor of the thinker. He spoke, not as one who discussed, but as one who, consciously superior to his audience, announced his conclusions; and at times, when most interested, he seemed to be addressing himself.

"Now, what is the actual condition here?" He rose, stretching himself against the mantel, lighting a match which died out, as did a half-dozen others, unnoticed on his pipe. "I say our colleges to-day are business colleges — Yale more so, perhaps, because it is more sensitively American. Let's take up any side of our life here. Begin with athletics. What has become of the natural, spontaneous joy of contest? Instead you have one of the most perfectly organized business systems for

achieving a required result — success. Football is driving, slavish work; there isn't one man in twenty who gets any real pleasure out of it. Professional baseball is not more rigorously disciplined and driven than our 'amateur' teams. Add the crew and the track. Play, the fun of the thing itself, doesn't exist; and why? Because we have made a business out of it all, and the college is scoured for material, just as drummers are sent out to bring in business.

"Take another case. A man has a knack at the banjo or guitar, or has a good voice. What is the spontaneous thing? To meet with other kindred spirits in informal gatherings in one another's rooms or at the fence, according to the whim of the moment. Instead what happens? You have our university musical clubs, thoroughly professional organizations. If you are material, you must get out and begin to work for them — coach with a professional coach, make the Apollo clubs, and, working on, some day in junior year reach the varsity organization and go out on a professional tour. Again an organization conceived on business lines.

"The same is true with the competition for our papers: the struggle for existence outside in a business world is not one whit more intense than the struggle to win out in the *News* or *Lit* competition. We are like a beef trust, with every by-product organized, down to the last possibility. You come to Yale — what is said to you? 'Be natural, be spontaneous, revel in a certain freedom, enjoy a leisure you'll never get again, browse around, give your imagination a chance, see every one, rub wits with every one, get to know yourself.'

"Is that what's said? No. What are you told, instead? 'Here are twenty great machines that need new bolts and wheels. Get out and work. Work harder

than the next man, who is going to try to outwork you. And, in order to succeed, work at only one thing. You don't count — everything for the college.' Regan says the colleges don't represent the nation; I say they don't even represent the individual."

"What would you do?" said Brown. "Abolish all organizations?"

"Absolutely," said Brockhurst, who never recoiled.

"What! Do you mean to say that the college of 1870 was a bigger thing than the college of to-day?"

"My dear Brown, it isn't even debatable," said Brockhurst, with a little contempt, for he did not understand nor like the man of flowing words. "What have we to-day that is bigger? Is it this organization of external activities? We have more bricks and stones, but have we the great figures in the teaching staff? I grant you, this is purely an economic failure — but at the bottom of the whole thing compare the spirit inside the campus now and then. Who were the leaders then? The men of brains. Then the college did reflect the country; then it was a vital hotbed of political thought. To-day everything that has been developed is outside the campus; and it's so in every college. This is the tendency — development away from the campus at the expense of the campus. That's why, when you ask me would I wipe out our business athletics and our professional musical and traveling dramatic clubs, I say, yes, absolutely. I would have the limits of college to be the walls of the campus itself, and we'd see, when men cease to be drafted for one grind or another, whether they couldn't begin to meet to think and to converse. However, that brings up the whole pet problem of education, and, I'm through talking. Go on, Pike; tell us that we are, after all, only schools for character."

"Brocky, you certainly are a radical — a terrific one," said Pike, shaking his head. Regan, smoking, said nothing.

"A sort of red-shirt, eh?" said Brockhurst, smiling. "You always go off on a tangent."

"Well, there's a good deal in what Brocky says," said Regan, nodding slowly, "about bringing us all back into the campus and shutting out the world. It's the men here, all sorts and conditions, that, after all, are big things, the vital thing. I'm thinking over what you're saying, Brocky — not that I follow you altogether, but I see what you're after — I get it."

Stover, on the contrary, was aware of only an antagonism, for his instinct was always to combat new ideas. There were things in what Brockhurst had said that touched him on the quick of his accepted loyalty. Then, he could not quite forget that in the matter of his sophomore society he had rejected him as being a little "queer." So he said rather acidly:

"Brockhurst, one question. If you feel as you do, why do you stay here?"

Brockhurst, who had withdrawn after his outburst, a little self-conscious again, flushed with anger at this question. But with an effort he controlled himself, saying:

"Stover has not perceived that I have been talking of general conditions all through the East; that I am not fool enough to believe one Eastern university is different in essentials from another. What I criticize here I criticize in American life. As to why I remain at Yale, I remain because I think, because, having the advantages of my own point of view, I can see clearer those who are still conventionalized."

"But you don't believe in working for Yale," persisted

Stover, for he was angry at what he perceived had been his discourtesy.

"Work for Yale! Work for Princeton! Work for Harvard! Bah! Sublime poppycock!" exclaimed Brockhurst, in a sort of fury. "Of all drivel preached to young Americans, that is the worst. I came to Yale for an education. I pay for it — good pay. I ask, first and last, what is Yale going to do for me? Work for Yale, go out and slave, give up my leisure and my independence — to do what for Yale? To keep turning the wheels of some purely inconsequential machine, or strive like a gladiator. Is that doing anything for Yale, a seat of learning? If I'm true to myself, make the most of myself, go out and be something, stand for something *after* college, then ask the question if you want. Ridiculous! Hocus-pocus and flap-doodle! Lord! I don't know anything that enrages me more. Good night; I'm going. Heaven knows what I'll say if I stay!"

He clapped his hat on his head and broke out of the door. The chorus of exclamations in the room died down. Ricketts, still shifting his victorious pile, began to whistle softly to himself. Regan, languidly stretched out, with a twinkle in his eyes kept watching Stover, staring red and concentrated into the fire.

"Well?" he said at last.

Stover turned.

"Well?" said Regan, smiling.

Dink rapped the ashes from his pipe, scratched his head, and said frankly:

"Of course I shouldn't have said what I did. I got well spanked for it, and I deserve it."

"What do you think of his ideas?" said Regan, nodding appreciatively at Stover's fair acknowledgment.

"I don't know," said Stover, puzzled. "I guess I

haven't used my old thinker enough lately to be worth anything in a discussion. Still —"

"Still what?" said Regan, as Dink hesitated.

"Still, he has made me think," he admitted grudgingly. "I wish he didn't quite — quite get on my nerves so."

"There's a great deal in what he said to-night," said Pike meditatively; "a great deal. Of course, he is always looking at things from the standpoint of the individual; still, just the same —"

"Brocky always states only one side of the proposition," said Brown, who rarely measured swords when Brockhurst was present in the flesh. "He takes for granted his premise, and argues for a conclusion that must follow."

"Well, what's your premise, Brown?" said Stover hopefully, for he wanted to be convinced.

"This is my premise," said Brown fluently. "The country has changed, the function of a college has changed. It is now the problem of educating masses and not individuals. To-day it is a question of perfecting a high average. That's what happens everywhere in college: we all tend toward the average; what some lose others gain. We go out, not as individuals, but as a type — a Yale type, Harvard type, Princeton type, five hundred strong, proportionately more powerful in our influence on the country."

"Just what does our type take from here to the nation?" said Stover; and then he was surprised that he had asked the question that was vital.

"What? What does this type stand for? I'll tell you," said Brown readily, with the debater's trick of repeating the question to gain time. "First, a pretty fine type of gentleman, with good, clear, honest stand-

ards; second, a spirit of ambition and a determination not to be beaten; third, the belief in democracy."

"All of which means," said Regan, "that we are simply schools for character."

"Well, why not?" said Pike. "Isn't that a pretty big thing?"

"You're wrong on the democracy, Brown," said Regan, with a snap of his jaws.

"I mean the feeling of man to man."

"Perhaps."

Stover at that moment was not so certain that he would have answered the same. The discussion had so profoundly interested him that he forgot a certain timidity.

"What would Brockhurst answer to the school-for-character idea?" he said.

"I calculate he'd have a lovely time with it," said Ricketts, with a laugh, "a regular dog-and-slipper time of it."

"In all which," said Swazey's quick voice, "there is no question about our learning a little bit."

A laugh broke out.

"Lord, no!"

"That doesn't count?"

"Why the curriculum?"

"That," said Regan, rising, "brings up the subject of education, which is deferred until another time. Ladies and gentlemen, good night. Who's winning? Ricketts. That's because he's said nothing. Good night, everybody."

Stover went with him.

"Tom," he said, when they came toward the campus, "do you know what I've learned to-night? I've learned what a complete ignoramus I am."

"How did you happen in?" said Regan.

Stover related the incident without mincing words.

"You're a lucky boy," said Regan, at the conclusion. "I'm glad you're waking up."

"You know I know absolutely nothing. I haven't thought on a single subject, and as for politics, and what you men talk about, I don't know the slightest thing. I say, Tom, I'd like to come around and talk with you."

"Come," said Regan; "I've had the door on the latch for a long while, old rooster."

CHAPTER XVII

THE next afternoon Stover passed Brockhurst going to dinner.

"Hello," he said, with a cordial wave of the hand.

"Hello," said Brockhurst, with a little avoidance, for he had a certain physical timidity, which always shrank at the consequences of his mental insurgency.

"I was a chump and a fool last night," said Stover directly, "and here's my apology."

"Oh, all right."

"Drop in on me. Talk things over. You've started me thinking. Drop in — I mean it."

"Thanks, awfully."

Brockhurst, ill at ease, moved away, pursued always by a shackling self-consciousness in the presence of those to whom he consciously felt he was mentally superior.

One direct result came to Stover from the visit to Swazey's rooms. Despite the protests and arguments, he did not report for the competition for the crew.

"Stay in for a couple of months," said Le Baron. "We want the moral effect of every one's coming out."

"Sorry; I've made up my mind," said Dink.

"Why?"

"Want time to myself. I've never had it, and now I'm going to get it."

Le Baron of the machine did not understand him, and he did not explain. Stover was essentially a man of action and not a thinker. He did not reason things out

for himself, but when he became convinced he acted. So, when he had thought over Brockhurst's theories and admitted that he was not independent, he determined at once to be so. He began zealously, turning his back on his own society crowd, to seek out the members of his class whom he did not know, resolved that his horizon should be of the freest. For the first time he began to reason on what others said to him. He went often to Swazey's rooms, and Regan's, which were centers of discussion. Some of the types that drifted in were incongruous, bizarre, flotsam and jetsam of the class; but in each, patiently resolved, he found something to stir the imagination; and when, under Regan's quickening influence, he stopped to consider what life in the future would mean to them, he began to understand what his friend, the invincible democrat, meant by the inspiring opportunity of college — the vision of a great country that lay on the lips of the men he had only to seek out.

Dink was of too direct a nature and also too confident in the strength of his position to consider the effect of his sudden pilgrimage to what was called the "outsiders." Swazey and Pike, at his invitation, took to dropping into his room and working out their lessons with him. Quite unconsciously, he found himself constantly in public companionship with them and other newly discovered types who interested him.

About two weeks after this new life had begun, Le Baron stopped him one day, with a little solicitous frown, saying:

"Look here, Dink, aren't you cutting loose from your own crowd a good deal?"

"Why, yes, I guess I am," Dink announced, quite unconsciously.

"I wouldn't get identified too much with — well, with some of the fellows you've taken up."

Stover smiled, and went his way undisturbed. For the first time he felt his superiority over Le Baron. Le Baron could not know what he knew — that it was just these new acquaintances who had waked him up out of his torpor and made a thinking being of him. Others in his class, mistaking his motives, began to twit him:

"I say, Dink, what are you out for?"

"Running for something?"

"Getting into politics?"

"Junior Prom, eh?"

He turned the jests aside with jests as ready, quite unaware that in his own crowd he was arousing a little antagonism; for he was developing in such deep lines that he did not perceive vexing details.

All at once he remembered that it had been over a fortnight since he had called at the Storys' and he ran over one afternoon about four o'clock, expecting to stay for dinner; for the Judge kept open house to the friends of his son, and Stover had readily availed himself of the privilege to become intimate.

Although Bob Story was bound to him by the closest social ties, Dink felt, nor was he altogether at fault in the feeling, that the brother was still on the defensive with him, due to a natural resentment perhaps at Dink's too evident interest in his sister.

When he arrived at the old colonial house set back among the elms, Eliza, the maid, informed him that no one was at home. Miss Jean was out riding. But immediately she corrected herself, and, going upstairs to make sure, returned with the welcome information that Miss Story had just returned and begged him to wait.

He took the request as a meager evidence of her inter-

est, and entered the drawing-room. Waiting there for her to come tripping down the stairs, he began to think of the new horizon that had opened to him, and the new feeling of maturity; and, feeling this with an acute realization, he was impatient for her to come, that he might tell her.

It was a good ten minutes before he turned suddenly at a rustling on the stairs, and saw her, fresh and flushed from the ride.

"It's awfully good of you to wait," she called to him. "I did my best to rush."

Arrived on the landing, she gave him her hand, looking at him a little earnestly.

"How are you? You're a terrible stranger."

"Have I been very bad?" he said, holding her hand.

"Indeed you have. Even Bob said he hardly saw you. What have you been doing?"

She withdrew her hand gently, but stood before him, looking into his face with her frank, inquiring eyes. Stover wondered if she thought he'd been a trifle wild; and, as there was no justification, he was immensely flattered, and a little tempted dramatically to assume an attitude that would call for reform. He smiled and said:

"I've been on a voyage of discovery, that's all. You'll be interested."

They sat down, and he began directly to talk, halting in broken phrases at first, gradually finding his words as he entered his subject.

"By George! I've had a wonderful two weeks — a revelation — just as though — just as though I'd begun my college course; that's really what it means. All I've done before doesn't count. And to think, if it hadn't been for an accident, I might have gone on without ever waking up."

He recounted his visit to Swazey's rooms, drawing a picture of his self-satisfied self descending *en prince* to bestow a favor; and, warming out of his stiffness, drew a word picture of Swazey's telling his story before the fire, and the rough sentiment with which he brought forth the odd, common little tintypes.

"By George! the fellow had told a great story and he didn't know it; but I knew it, and it settled me," he added with earnestness, always aware of her heightened attention. "It was a regular knockout blow to the conceited, top-heavy, prancing little ass who had gone there. By Jove, it gave me a jar. I went out ashamed."

"It is a very wonderful life — simple, wonderful," she said slowly, thinking more of the relator than of the story. "I understand all you felt."

"You know life's real to those fellows," he continued, with more animation. "They're after something in this world; they believe in something; they're fighting for something. There's nothing real in me — that is, there wasn't. By George, these two weeks that I've gone about, looking for the men in the class, have opened up everything to me. I never knew my own country before. It's a wonderful country! It's the simple lives that are so wonderful."

She had in her hand a piece of embroidery, but she did not embroider. Her eyes never left his face. For the first time, the rôles were reversed: it was he who talked and she who listened. From time to time she nodded, satisfied at the decision and direction in his character, which had answered the first awakening suggestion.

"Who is Pike?" she asked.

"Pike is a little fellow from a little life in some country town in Indiana; the only one in a family of

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eight children that's amounted to anything — father's a pretty even sort, I guess; so are the rest of them. But this fellow has a dogged persistence — not so quick at thinking things out, but, Lord! how he listens; nothing gets away from him. I can see him growing right under my eyes. He's interested in politics, same as Regan; wants to go back and get a newspaper some day. He'll do it, too. Why, that fellow has been racing ahead ever since he came here, and I've been standing still. Ricketts is an odd character, a sort of Yankee genius, shrewd, and some of his observations are as sharp as a knife. Brockhurst has the brains of us all; he can out-think us every one. But he's a spectator; he's outside looking on. I can't quite get used to him. Regan's the fellow I want for a friend. He's like an old Roman. When he makes up his mind — it takes him a long while — when he does, he's right."

He recounted Regan's ideas on politics — his enthusiasm, and his ideal of a college life that would reflect the thought of the nation.

Then, talking to himself, he began to walk up and down, flinging out quick, stiff gestures:

"Brockhurst states a thing in such a slap-bang way — no compromise — that it hits you at first like a blow. But when you think it over he has generally got to the point. Where he's wrong is, he thinks the society system here keeps a man wrapped in cotton, smothering him and separating him from the class. Now, I'm an example to the contrary. It's all a question of the individual. I thought it wasn't at one moment, but now I know that it is. You can do just what you want — find what you want.

"But we do get so interested in outside things that we forget the real; that's true. Brockhurst says we

ought to bring the college back to the campus, and the more I think of it the more I see what he means. The best weeks, the biggest in my life, are those when I've realized I had an imagination and could use it." Suddenly he halted, gave a quick glance at her, and said:

"Here I'm talking like a runaway horse. I got started."

"Thank you for talking to me so," she said eagerly.

He had never seen in her eyes so much of genuine impulse toward him, and, suddenly recalled, in this moment of exhilaration, to the personal self, he was thrilled with a strange thrill at what he saw.

"You remember," he said, with a certain new boldness, "how impudent you used to be to me, and how furious I was when you told me I was not awake."

"I remember."

"Now I understand what you meant," he said, "but then I didn't."

She rose to order tea, and then turned impulsively, smiling up to him.

"I think — I'm sure I felt it would come to you; only I was a little impatient."

And with a happy look she offered him her hand.

"I'm very glad to be your friend," she said, to make amends; "and I hope you'll come and talk over with me all that you are thinking. Will you?"

He did not answer. At the touch of her hand, which he held in his, at the new sound in her voice, suddenly something surged up in him, something blinding, intoxicating, that left him hot and cold, rash and silent. She tried to release her hand, but his grip was not to be denied.

Then, seeing him standing head down boyishly unable to speak or act, she understood.

"Oh, please!" she said, with a sudden weakness, again trying to release her fingers.

"I can't help it," he said, blurting out the words. "Jean, you know as well as I what it is. I love you."

The moment the words were out, he had a cold horror of what had been said. He didn't love her, not as he had said it. Why had he said it?

She remained motionless a moment, gathering her strength against the shock.

"Please let go my hand," she said quietly.

This time he obeyed. His mind was a vacuum; every little sound came to him distinctly, with the terror of the blunder he had made.

She went to the window and stood, her face half turned from him, trying to think; and, misreading her thoughts, a little warm blood came back to him, and he tried to think what he would say if she came back with a light in her eyes.

"Mr. Stover."

He looked up abruptly — he had scarcely moved. She was before him, her large eyes seeming larger than ever, her face a little frightened, but serious with the seriousness of the woman looking out.

"You have done a very wrong thing," she said slowly, "and you have placed me in a very difficult position. I do not want to lose you as a friend." She made a rapid movement of her fingers to check his exclamation. "If what you said were true, and you are too young to have said such solemn words, may I ask what right you had to say them to me?"

"What right?" he said stupidly.

"Yes, what right," she repeated, looking at him steadily with a certain wistfulness. "Are you in a position to ask me to be your wife?"

"Let me think a moment," he said, drawing a breath.

He walked away to the table, leaning his weight on it, while, without moving, she followed with a steady gaze, in which was a little pity.

"Let me help you," she said at last.

He turned and looked up for the first time, a look of wretchedness.

"It would be too bad that one moment should spoil all our friendship," she said, "and because that would hurt me I don't want it so. You are a boy, and I am not yet a woman. I have always respected you, no more so than to-day, before — before you forgot your respect toward me. I want always to keep the respect I had for you."

"Don't say any more," he said suddenly, with a lump in his throat. "I don't know why — what — why I forgot myself. Please don't take away from me your friendship. I will keep it very precious."

"It is very hard to know what to do," she said. Then she added, with a little heightening of her color: "My friendship means a great deal."

He put out his hand and gently took the end of a scarf which she wore about her shoulders, and raised it to his lips. It was a boyish, impulsive fantasy, and he inclined his head before her. Then he went out hurriedly, without speaking or turning, while the girl, pale and without moving, continued to stare at the curtain which still moved with his passing.

CHAPTER XVIII

STOVER went rushing from the Storys' home, and away for a long feverish march along dusky avenues, where unseen leaves came whirling against him. He was humiliated, mortified beyond expression, in a panic of self-accusation and remorse.

"It's all over," he said, with a groan. "I've made a fool of myself. I can never square myself after that. What under the shining stars made me say that? What happened? I hadn't a thought, and then all at once — Oh, Lord!"

A couple of upper classmen returning nodded to him, and he flung back an abrupt "Hello," without distinguishing them.

"Why did I do it? — why — why!"

He went plunging along, through the dark regions that lay between the spotted arc lights that began to sputter along the avenue, his ears deafened by the rush and grind of blazing trolley cars. When he had gone breathlessly a good two miles, he stopped and wearily retraced his steps. The return no longer gave him the sensation of flight. He came back laggingly, with reluctance. Each time he thought of the scene which had passed he had a sensation of heat and cold, of anger and of cowardice. Never again he said to himself, would he be able to enter the Storys' home, to face her, Jean Story.

But after a time, from sheer exhaustion, he ceased to think about his all-important self. He remembered the

dignity and gentleness with which the young girl had met the shock of his blunder, and he was overwhelmed with wonder. He saw again her large eyes, filled with pain, trouble, and yet a certain pity. He recalled her quiet voice, the direct meeting of the issue, and deep through all impressions was the memory of the woman, sweet, self-possessed, and gentle, that had been evoked from her eyes.

He forgot himself. He forgot all the wretchedness and hot misery. He remembered only this Jean Story, and the Jean Story that would be. And feeling the revealing acuteness of love for the first time, he said impulsively:

"Oh, yes, I love her. I have always loved her!" And silently, deep in his heart, a little frightened almost to set the thought to words, he made a vow that his life from now on should be earnest and inspired with but one purpose, to win her respect and to win the right to ask her for his wife.

With the resolve, all the fret and fever went from him. He felt a new confidence and a new maturity.

"When I speak again, I shall have the right," he said solemnly. "And she shall see that I am not a mere boy. That I will show her soon!"

When he came again into the domain of the college, he suddenly felt all the littleness of the ambitions that raged inside those self-sufficient walls.

"Lord, what have I been doing all this time — what does it count for? Brocky is right; it isn't what you do here, it's what you are ready to do when you go out. Thank Heaven, I can see it now." And secure in the knowledge that the honors he rated so lightly were his, he added: "There's only one thing that counts — that's your own self."

It was after the dinner hour, and he hesitated; a little tired of his own company, longing for the diversion another personality would bring, and seeking some one as far removed from his own point of view as possible, he halted before Durfee, and sent his call to the top stories:

"Oh, Ricky Ricketts, stick out your head."

Above a window went up, and a fuzzy head came curiously forth.

"Wot'ell, Bill?"

"It's Stover, Dink Stover. Come down."

"Somethin' doin'?"

"You bet."

Presently, Ricketts's bean-stalk figure came flopping out of the entry.

"What's up, Dink?"

"I'm back too late for supper. Come on down with me to Mory's and keep me company, and I'll buy you a drink."

"Did I hear the word "buy'?" said Ricketts, in the manner then made popular by the lamented Pete Dailey.

"You did."

"Lead me to it."

At Mory's, two or three men whom he didn't know were at the senior table. Le Baron and Reynolds, prospective captain of the crew and chairman of the *News*, respectively, men of his own society, gave him a hearty, "Hello, Dink," and then stared curiously at Ricketts, whose general appearance neither conformed to any one fashion nor to any two. Gimbel, the politician, was in the off room with three of the more militant anti-sophomore society leaders. The two parties saluted in regulation style.

"Hello, you fellows."

"Howdy, there."

Stover, sitting down, saw Gimbel's perplexed glance at his companion, and thought to himself:

"I've got Gimbel way up a tree. I'll bet he thinks I'm trying to work out some society combine against him."

The thought recalled to him all the increasing bitterness of the anti-sophomore society fight which had swept the college. There was talk even of an open mass meeting. He remembered that Hunter had mentioned it, and for a moment he was inclined to put the question direct to Gimbel. But his mood was alien to controversy, and Louis, with sidelong, beady eyes, and a fragrant aroma, was waiting the order.

Ricketts had, among twenty Yankee devices for greasing his journey through college, a specialty of breaking in new pipes, one of which he now produced, with an apologetic:

"You don't mind, do you, if I crack my lungs on this appetizing little trifle?"

"I say, Ricketts," said Stover, trying to keep off his mind the one subject, "is that all a joke about your breaking in pipes?"

"Straightest thing in the world."

"What do you charge?"

"Thirty-five cents and the tobacco."

"You ought to charge fifty."

"I'm going to next year. You think I'm loony?" said Ricketts.

"I'm not sure."

"Dink, my boy, I'll be a millionaire in ten years. You know what I'm figuring out all this time? I'm going at this scientifically. I'm figuring out the number of fools there are on the top of this globe, classifying 'em, looking

out what they want to be fooled on. I'm making an exact science of it."

"Go on," said Dink, amused and perplexed, for he was trying to distinguish the serious and the humorous.

"What's the principle of a patent medicine? — advertise first, then concoct your medicine. All the science of Foolology is: first, find something all the fools love and enjoy, tell them it's wrong, hammer it into them, give them a substitute and sit back, chuckle, and shovel away the ducats. Bread's wrong, coffee's wrong, beer's wrong. Why, Dink, in the next twenty years all the fools will be feeding on substitutes for everything they want; no salt — denatured sugar — anti-tea — oiloline — peanut butter — whale's milk — et cetera, et ceteray, and blessing the name of the fool-master who fooled them."

"By Jingo," said Stover, listening to this jumble of words, entranced, "I believe you're right. And so you've reduced it to a science, eh — Foolology?"

Ricketts, half in earnest, never entirely in jest, abetted by newly arriving tobies, was off again on his pet theories of business imagination, disdaining the occasional gibes that were flung at him from Gimbel's table.

When Le Baron and Reynolds passed out, with curious glances, Stover was weak with laughter. Later arrivals dropping in joined them, egging on the inventor.

Stover, who had been busily consulting his watch, left at half-past eight on a sudden resolve. The farcical interruption that had temporarily drawn him out of himself, had cleared his head, and brought him a sudden authoritative decision.

He went directly to the Storys', and, entering the parlor, found a group of his crowd there, dinner finished, trying out the latest comic opera chorus.

He came in quite coldly self-possessed, shook hands, and immediately jumped into the conversation, which was all on the crisis in the sophomore societies. Jean Story was at the piano, a little more serious than usual. At his entrance, she looked up with sudden wonder and confusion. He came to her, and in taking her hand inclined his head in great respect, but did not speak to her. He had but one desire, to show her that he was not a boy but a man, and that he could rise to the crisis which he had brought on himself.

Hunter and Tommy Bain had been arguing for no compromise, Bob Story and Hungerford were of the opinion that the time had come to enlarge the membership of the societies, and to destroy their exclusiveness.

On the sofa, the little Judge, a spectator, never intimating his opinion, studying each man as he spoke, appealed to Stover:

"Well, now, Judge Dink, what is your learned opinion on this situation? Here is the dickens to pay; three-fourths the college lined up against you fellows, and a public mass meeting coming. Jim Hunter here believes in sitting back and letting the storm blow over; Bob, who of course can regulate it all, wants to double the membership and meet some objections. Now what do you say? Mr. Stover has the floor. My daughter will please come to order."

Jean Story abruptly turned from the piano, where her fingers had been absent-mindedly running over the keys.

"Frankly, I haven't made up my mind just yet," said Stover. "There are a great many sides to it. I've listened to a good many opinions, but haven't yet chosen mine. Every one is talking about the effect on the college, but what has impressed me most is the effect on the

sophomore society men themselves. If the outsiders only knew the danger and handicap they are to us!"

"Hello," said the Judge, shifting with a little interest.

"What do you mean?" said Hunter aggressively.

"I mean we are the ones who are limited, who are liable to miss the big opportunities of college life. We have got into the habit, under the pretense of good fellowship, of herding together."

"Why shouldn't we?" persisted Hunter.

"Because we shut ourselves up, withdraw from the big life of the college, know only our own kind, the kind we'll know all our life; surrender our imagination. We represent only a social idea, a good time, good friends, good figure-heads on the different machines of the college. But we miss the big chance — to go out, to mingle with every one, to educate ourselves by knowing opposite lives, fellows who see things as we never have seen them, who are going back to a life a thousand miles away from what we will lead." He expressed himself badly, and, realizing it, said impatiently: "Here, what I mean is this. It's not my idea, it's Brockhurst's, it's Tom Regan's. The biggest thing we can do is to reflect the nation, to be the inspiration of the democracy of the country, to be alive to the fight among the people for real political independence. We ought to get a great vision when we come up here, as young men, of the bigness of our country, of the privilege of fighting out its political freedom, of what American manhood means in the towns of Georgia and Texas, in the little manufacturing cities of New England, in the great West, and in the small homes of the big cities. We ought to really know one another, meet, discuss, respect each other's point of view, independence — odd ways if you wish. We don't do it. We did once — we don't now. Prince-

ton doesn't do it, Harvard doesn't do it. We're over-organized away from the vital thing — the knowledge of ourselves."

"Then you'd abolish the sophomore societies?" said Hunter, crowding him to the wall.

"I don't know. Sometimes I've felt it's the system that is wrong," said Stover frankly. "Lately, I've changed my mind. I think we can do what we want — at least I know I've gone out and met whom I wanted to without my being in a sophomore society making the slightest difference. I say I don't know where the trouble is; whether the whole social system here and elsewhere is the cause or the effect. It may be that it is the whole development of America that has changed our college life. I don't know; those questions are too big for me to work out. But I know one thing, that my own ideas of what I want here have taken a back somersault, and that I'm going out of here knowing everything I can of every man in the class." Suddenly he remembered Hunter's opposition, and turning, concluded: "One thing more; if ever I make up my mind that the sophomore society system or any other system ought to be abolished, I'll stand out and say so."

When he had finished, his classmates began talking all at once, Hunter and Bain in bitter opposition, Bob Story in warm defense, Hungerford, in his big-souled way, coming ponderously to his assistance.

Stover withdrew from the conversation. He glanced at Jean Story, wondering if she had understood the reason of his return, and that he had spoken for her ears alone. She was still at the piano, one hand resting on the keyboard, looking at him with the same serious, half-troubled expression in her large eyes. He made an excuse to leave, and for the second that he stood by her,

he looked into her eyes boldly, with even a little bravado, as though to ask:

"Do you understand?"

But the young girl, without speaking, nodded her head slightly, continuing to look at him with her wistful, a little wounded glance.

CHAPTER XIX

IT was only a little after nine. He had left in the company of Joe Hungerford, who had ostensibly taken the opportunity of going with him.

"I say, Dink," he began directly, in the blustering, full-mouthed way he had when excited, "I say bully for you. Lord, I liked to hear you talk out."

"It's all simple enough," said Stover, surprised at the other's enthusiasm. "I suppose I wouldn't have said all I did if it hadn't been for Hunter."

"Oh, Jim's a damned hard-shell from way back," said Hungerford good-humoredly, "never mind him. I say though, Dink, you really have been going round, haven't you, breaking through the lines?"

"Yes, I have."

"I wish you'd take me around with you some time," said Hungerford enviously.

"Why the deuce don't you break in yourself?"

"It doesn't come natural, Dink," said the inheritor of millions regretfully. "I never went through boarding-school like you fellows. By George, it's just what I want, what I hoped for here! and, damn it, what I'm not getting!"

"You know, Joe," said Dink suddenly, "there wouldn't be any society problem if fellows that felt the way you and I do would assert themselves. By George, there's nothing wrong with the soph societies, the trouble is with us."

"I'm not so sure," said Hungerford seriously.

"Rats!"

"You know, Dink," said Joe with a little hesitation, "it is not every one who understands you or what you're doing."

"I know," said Stover, laughing confidently. "Some have got an idea I've got some great political scheme, working in with the outsiders to run for the Junior Prom, or something like that."

"No, it's not all that. I don't think some of our crowd realize what you're doing — rather fancy you're cutting loose from them."

"Let them think," said Stover carelessly. Then he added with some curiosity: "Has there been much talk?"

"Yes, there has."

"Any one spoken to you?"

"Yes."

"I know — I know they've got an idea I'm queering myself — oh, that word 'queer'; it's the bogey of the whole place."

"You're right there! But, Dink, I might as well let you know the feeling; it isn't simply in our set, but some of the crowd ahead."

"Le Baron, Reynolds?"

"Yes. Haven't they ever — ever said anything to you?"

"Bless their simple hearts," said Stover, untroubled. "So they're worrying about me. It's rather humorous. It's their inherited point of view. Le Baron, Joe, could no more understand what we are thinking about — and yet he's a fine type. Sure, he's stopped me a couple of times and shaken his head in a worried, fatherly way. To him, you see, everything is selective; what he calls the fellow who doesn't count, the 'fruit,' is really out-

side what he understands, the fellows who are in the current of what's being done here. I must talk it out with him sometime. We've come to absolutely opposite points of view. And yet the curious thing is, he's fond as the deuce of me."

"Yes, that's so," said Hungerford. He did not insist, seeing that Stover was insensible to the hints he had tried to convey. Not wishing to express openly a point of view which was personally unsympathetic, he hesitated and remained silent.

"Coming up for a chin?" said Dink, as they neared the campus.

"No, I've got a date at Heub's. I say, Dink, I'm serious in what I said. I want to wake up and get around. Work me in."

"You bet I will, and you'll meet a gang that really have some ideas."

"That's what I want. Well, so long."

"So long, Joe."

Dink, turning to the right, entered the campus past Battell. He had never before felt so master of himself, or surer of a clear vision. The thought of his instinctive return to the Storys', and the knowledge that he had distinguished himself before Jean Story, gave him a certain exhilaration. He began to feel the opportunity that was in his hands. He remembered with pleasure Hungerford's demand to follow where he had gone, and he said to himself:

"I can make this crowd of mine see what the real thing is — and, by George, I'm going to do it."

As he delayed in the campus, Le Baron and Reynolds passed him, going toward Durfee.

"Hello, Dink."

"Hello there."

He continued on to his entry, and, turning, saw the two juniors stop and watch him. Without heed he went up to his room, lit the dusty gas-jet, and went reverently to his bureau. He was in his bedroom, standing there in a sentimental mood, gazing at the one or two little kodaks he had displayed of Jean Story, when a knock sounded. He turned away abruptly, singing out:

"Let her come."

The door opened and some one entered, and, emerging from his bedroom, he beheld to his surprise Le Baron and Reynolds.

"Hello," he said, puzzled.

"Anything doing, Dink?" said Le Baron pleasantly.

"Not a thing. Make yourself at home," he said hastily. "Take a seat. Pipe tobacco in the jar—cigarettes on the table."

Each waved his hand in dissent. Reynolds seated himself in a quick, business-like way on the edge of his chair; Le Baron, more sociable, passed curiously about the room, examining the trophies with interest.

"I wonder what's up now," thought Dink, without uneasiness. He knew that it was the custom of men in the class above about to go into the senior societies to acquaint themselves with the tendencies of the next class. "That's it," he said to himself; "they want to know if I'm heeling Bones or Keys."

"You've got a great bunch of junk," said Le Baron, finishing his inspection.

"Yes, it's quite a mixture."

Le Baron, refusing a seat, stood before the fireplace, a pocket knife juggling in his hands, seeking an opening.

"Here, I'll have a cigarette," he said finally, with a frown.

Reynolds, more business-like, broke out:

"Dink, we've dropped in to have a little straight talk with you."

"All right."

He felt a premonition of what was coming, and the short note of authority in Reynolds's voice seemed to stiffen everything inside of him.

"We've dropped a few hints to you," continued Reynolds, in his staccato manner, "and you haven't chosen to understand them. Now we're going to put it right to you."

"Hold up, Benny," said Le Baron, who had lit his cigarette, "it's not necessary to talk that way. Let me explain."

"No, put it to me straight," said Stover, looking past Le Baron straight into Reynolds's eyes. An instinctive antagonism was in him, the revolt of the man of action, the leader in athletics, at being criticized by the man of the pen.

"Stover, we don't like what you've been doing lately."

"Why not?"

"You're shaking your own crowd, and you're identifying yourself with a crowd that doesn't count. What the deuce has got into you?"

"Just shut up for a moment, Benny," said Le Baron, giving him a look, "you're not putting the thing in the right way."

"I'm not jumping on any one," said Reynolds. "I'm giving him good advice."

Stover looked at him without speaking, then he turned to Le Baron.

"Well?"

"Look here, Dink," said Le Baron conciliatingly. "A lot of us fellows have spoken to you, but you didn't seem

to understand. Now, what I'm saying is because I like you, and because you are making a mistake. We're interested personally, and for the society's sake, in seeing you make out of yourself what you ought to be, one of the big men of the class. Dink, what's happened? Have you lost your nerve about anything — anything wrong?"

"Wait a moment — let me understand the thing," said Stover, absolutely dumbfounded. Reynolds's purely unintentional false start had left him cold with anger. "Am I to understand that you have come here to inform me that you do not approve of the friends I've been making?"

"Hold up," said Le Baron.

"No, let's have it straight. That's what I want, too," he said quickly, facing Reynolds. "You criticize the crowd I'm going with, and you want me to chuck them. That's it in plain English, isn't it?"

A little flush showed on Reynolds's face. He, too, felt the physical superiority in Stover, and the antagonism thereof, and, being provoked, he answered more shortly than he meant to:

"Let it go at that."

"Is that right?" said Stover, turning to Le Baron.

"Now, look here, Dink, there's no use in getting hot about this," said Le Baron uneasily. "No one's forcing anything on you. We are here as your friends, telling you what we believe is for your own good."

"So you think if I go on identifying myself with the crowd I'm with that I may 'queer' myself?"

"That's rather strong."

"Why not have it out?"

"This is true," said Le Baron, "that the men in your own crowd don't understand your cutting loose from

them, and that no one can make out why you've taken up with the crowd you have."

The explanation which might have cleared matters was forgotten by Stover in the wound to his vanity.

"You haven't answered my question."

"Well, Dink, to be honest," said Le Baron, "if you keep on deliberately, there is more than a chance of —"

"Of queering myself?"

"Yes."

"Being regarded as a sort of wild man, and missing out on a senior election."

"That's what we want to prevent," said Le Baron, believing he saw a reasonable excuse. "You've got everything in your hands, Stover, don't waste your time —"

"One moment."

Stover, putting out his hand, interrupted him. He locked his hands behind his back, twisting them in physical pain, staring out the window, unable to meet the suddenness of the situation.

"You've been quite frank," he said, when he was able to speak. "You have not come to me to dictate who should be my friends here, though that's perhaps a quibble, but as members of my sophomore society you have come to advise me against what might queer me. I understand. Well, gentlemen, you absolutely amaze me. I didn't believe it possible. I'll think it over."

He looked at them with a quick nod, intimating that there was nothing more to be discussed. Reynolds, saying something under his breath, sprang up. Le Baron, feeling that the interview had been a blunder from the first, said suddenly:

"Benny, see here; let me have a moment's talk with Dink."

"Quite useless, Hugh," said Stover, in the same controlled voice. "There's nothing more to be said. You have your point of view, I have mine. I understand. There's no pressure being put on me, only, if I am to go on choosing my friends as I have — I do it at my own risk. I've listened to you. I don't know what I shall answer. That's all. Good night."

Reynolds went out directly, Le Baron slowly, with much hesitation, seeking some opportunity to remain, with a last uneasy glance.

When Stover was left to himself, his first sensation was of absolute amazement. He, the big man of the class, confident in the security of his position, had suddenly tripped against an obstruction, and been made to feel his limitations.

"By Heavens! If any one would have told me, I wouldn't have believed it — the fools!"

The full realization of the pressure that had been exerted on him did not yet come to him. He was annoyed, as some wild animal at the first touch of a rope that seems only to check him.

He moved about the room, tossing back his hair impatiently.

"That's what Hungerford was trying to hint to me," he said. "So my conduct has been under fire. What I do is a subject of criticism because I've gone out of the beaten way, done something they don't understand — the precious idiots!" Then he remembered Reynolds, and his anger began to rise. "The little squirt, the impudent little scribbler, to come and tell me what I should or shouldn't do! How the devil did I ever keep my temper? Who is he anyhow? I'll give him an answer!"

All at once he perceived the full extent of the situation,

and what a defiance would mean to those leaders in the class above, men marked for Skull and Bones, the society to which he aspired.

"No pressure!" he said aloud, with a grim laugh, "Oh, no! no pressure at all! Advice only — take it or leave it, but the consequences are on your head. By Heavens, I wouldn't have believed it." It hurt him, it hurt him acutely, that he, who had won his way to leadership, should have sat and listened to those who were the masters of his success.

"Hold up, hold up, Dink Stover," he said, all at once. "This is serious — a damn sight more serious than you thought. It's up to you. What are you going to do about it?"

All at once the temper that always lay close to his skin, uncontrollable and violent, broke out.

"By Heavens — and I stood for it — I stood there quietly and listened, and never said a word! But I didn't realize it — no, I didn't realize it. Yes, but he won't understand it, that damned little whipper-snapper of a Reynolds; he'll think I've kow-towed. He will, will he? We'll see! By Heavens, that's what their society game means, does it! Thank Heaven, I didn't argue with them. At least I didn't do that."

He strode over quickly, and seizing his cap clapped it on his head, and stopped.

"Now or never," he said, between his teeth.

He went out slamming the door; and as he went, furiously, all the anger and humiliation blazed up in a fierce revolt — he, Dink, Dink Stover, had stood tamely and listened while others had come and told him what to do, told him in so many words that he was "queering" himself. He went out of the entry almost at a run, with a sort of blind, unreasoning idea that he could overtake

them. By the fence he almost upset Dopey McNab, who called to him fruitlessly:

"Here — I say, Dink! What the devil!"

He reached the center of the campus before he stopped. He had quite lost control of himself; he knew what he would say, and he didn't care. Suddenly he recalled where Reynolds roomed, and went hot-foot for Vanderbilt, with a fierce physical longing to be provoked into a fight.

He arrived at the door breathlessly, a lump in his throat, never considering the chances of finding them out.

Le Baron and Reynolds were before the fireplace in a determined argument. He shut the door behind him, and leaned against it, digging his nails into his hands with the effort to master his voice.

The two juniors, struck by the violence of his entrance, turned abruptly, and Le Baron, a little pale, started forward, saying:

"I say, Dink —"

"Look here," he cried, flinging out a hand for silence. "I don't know why I didn't say it to you there — when you spoke to me. I don't know. I'm a low-livered coward and a skunk because I didn't! But I know now what I'm going to say, and I'll say it. You came to me, you dared to come to me and tell me what I was to do — to heel — that's what you meant; to cut out fellows I know and respect — oh, you didn't have the courage to say it out, but that's it. Well, now, I've just got one thing to say to you both. If this is what your society business means, if this is your idea of democracy — I'm through with you —"

"Hold up," said Le Baron, springing forward.

"I won't hold up," said Stover, beside himself, "for you or for any one else, or whatever you can do against

me! Here's my answer — I'm through! You and the whole society can go plumb to Hell!"

And suffocating, choking, blinded with his fury, he thrust his hand into his breast, and tore from his shirt the pin he had been given to wear, and flung it on the floor, stamped upon it, and bolted from the room.

CHAPTER XX

FOR an hour, bareheaded, he went plunging into the darkness, a prey to a nervous crisis, that left him shaking in every muscle. He knew the extent of his passions, and the anger which had swept over him left him weak and frightened.

"It's lucky that runt of a Reynolds held his tongue," he said hotly. "By the Lord, I don't know what I would have done to him. Here, I must get hold of myself. This is terrible. Well, thank Heaven, it's over."

He controlled himself slowly, and came back, limp and weak; yet beyond the physical reaction was a liberated soaring of the spirit.

"I'm glad I did it! I never was gladder!" he said solemnly. "Good-by to the whole society game, Skull and Bones, and all the rest. But I take my stand from now on, and I stand on my own feet. I'm glad of it." Then he thought of Jean Story, and he was troubled. "I wonder if she'll understand? I can't help it. I couldn't do anything else. Now, I suppose the whole bunch will turn on me. So be it."

It was long after midnight when he came back gloomily to the light still staring from his window, and toiled up the heavy steps. When he entered the room, Le Baron, Bob Story, and Joe Hungerford were sitting silently, waiting for him, and in Story's hand was the pin bruised by his furious heel.

He saw at once the full strength of the appeal that was to be made to him, and he closed the door wearily.

"I don't want to talk about it," he said slowly. "The whole thing is done and buried."

Bob Story, agitated and solemn, came to him.

"Dink, this is awful — the whole thing is awful," he said earnestly. "You've got to talk it out with us."

"Do you understand, Bob," Stover said suddenly, "just what happened in this room?"

"Yes, I think I do."

"I don't believe it."

"Dink, I want you to listen to me a moment," said Le Baron. "It's been rotten business, the whole wretched thing. I can understand how you felt. Reynolds and you got on each other's nerves. You each said what you didn't mean. It was damned unfortunate. He put things to you like a fool, and I was telling him so when you broke into the room. He was all up on edge from something that had gone before."

"Oh, I lost my temper," said Stover. "I know it."

"I'd have done the same," said Hungerford openly.

"Now, Dink, there isn't one of us here that doesn't like you, and look up to you," said Story, with his irresistible charm. "We know you're every inch a man, and what you do you believe in. But, Dink, we're all friends together, and this is a terrible thing to us. We want you to take back your pin, and shut up this whole business. Will you?"

"I'd do a great deal for you, Bob Story," said Stover, looking him in the eyes, "more than for any one else, but I can't do this."

He said it calmly, with a little sadness. The three were impressed with the finality of the judgment. Story, standing with the cast-off pin in his hand, turning and twisting it, said slowly:

"Dink, do you really mean it?"

"I do."

"It's a serious thing you're doing, Stover," said Le Baron, with the first touch of formality, "and I don't think it should be done in anger."

"I'm not."

"Remember that you are judging a whole society — your own friends — by what one man happened to say to you in a moment of irritation."

"I don't want to talk of what's done," said Stover slowly, for his head was throbbing. "I know myself, and I know nothing is going to make me go back on what I've said. I'm only going to say a word, and then I'm going into my room and going to bed. Le Baron"— with a sudden rise of his voice he turned and faced the junior —"don't think I don't understand what it means that I'm giving up. I get what you mean when you start in calling me Stover. I know as well as I'm standing here that you and Reynolds will keep me out of Bones, whether I make captain or not. And that'll hurt me a good bit — I admit it. Now don't let's quibble. It isn't the way Reynolds said what he did — though that did rile me — it's what was told me, indirectly or directly — it's the same thing; you men in sophomore societies would limit my freedom of choice. There you are. I'm against you now, because for the first time I see how the thing works out, because you're wrong! You're a bad influence for those who are in, and a rotten influence for the whole college. Now I've made up my mind to just one thing. I'm going to finish up here at the head of my own business — my own master; and I'm not going to be in a position to be told by any one in your class or my class what I'm to do."

"One moment." Le Baron rose as Stover moved towards the bedroom. "There's another side to it."

"What other side?"

"Whatever you decide, and I won't take your answer until the morning," said Le Baron solemnly, "I want you to give me your word that what's happened to-night remains a secret."

"I won't give my word to that or anything else," said Dink defiantly. "I shall do exactly what I think is right to be done, and for that reason only. Now you'll have to excuse me. Good night."

He went to his bedroom, shut the door, and without undressing tumbled on the bed, and, still hearing in a confused jumble the murmur of voices, dropped off to sleep.

He was startled out of heavy dreams by a beating in his ears, and sprang up to find Bob Story thundering on his door. He looked at his watch. It was still an hour before chapel.

When he entered his dim study, Story was waiting, and Hungerford uncoiling from the couch where he had passed the night.

"Have you fellows been here all night?" said Stover, stopping short.

"Dink, we want a last chance to talk this over," said Story solemnly. "We've all had a chance to sleep it out. Le Baron isn't here, just Joe and myself — your friends."

"You make it hard for me, boys," said Dink, shaking his head.

Hungerford rose with the stiffness of the night, and coming to Stover, took him by the shoulders.

"Damn you, Dink," he said, "get this straight, we're not thinking about the society, we're thinking about you — about your future. And I want you to know this: whatever you decide, I'm your friend and proud to be it."

"What Joe says is what I feel," said Story, as Stover, much affected, stood looking at the ground. "We're sticking by you, Dink — that's why I'm going to try once more. Can't you go on in the society, make no open break, and still fight for what you believe in — what Joe and I believe in, too?"

"But, Bob, I think they're wrong through and through — you don't understand — I'm for wiping them out now."

"That whole question's coming up, and coming up soon," continued Story earnestly, "and a lot of our own crowd will line up for you. Work inside the crowd, if you can see it that way, Dink. There are only five of us know what's happened, and no one else need know."

"Wait a moment, Bob, old fellow," said Dink, stopping him. "You two have got down under my skin, and I won't forget it. Now I'm going to ask you fellows a couple of questions. First: you think if I stick to my determination that most of the crowd'll turn on me?"

"Yes."

"That I have as much chance of being tapped for Bones as Jackson, the sweep?"

"Yes, Dink."

"Now, boys, honest, if I took back my pin for any such reason as that, wouldn't I be a spineless, calculating little quitter?"

Neither answered.

"What would you think of me, Joe — Bob?"

"Damn the luck," said Hungerford. He did not attempt to answer the question. Neither did Bob Story. They shook hands with Stover, and went out defeated.

Just how big a change in his college career his renunciation would make, Stover had not understood until in the weeks that succeeded he came to feel the full effects of the resentment he had aroused in the society crowds, now at bay before a determined opposition.

The second morning, as he went down High Street to his eating-joint, Hungerford was loafing ahead of him, ostensibly conning a lesson. Stover joined him, unaware of the friendly intent of the action. They went inside, laughing together, to where a score of men were rubbing their eyes over hasty breakfasts. Four-fifths of them belonged to sophomore societies.

"Morning, everybody," said the new arrivals, in unison, and the answer came back:

"Hello, Joe."

"Hello, Dink."

"Shove in here."

At their arrival a little constrained silence was felt, for the news had somehow passed into rumor. Opposite Stover, Jim Hunter was sitting. He nodded to Hungerford, and then with deliberation continued a conversation with Tommy Bain, who sat next to him.

Stover perceived the cut instantly, as others had perceived it. He sat a moment quietly, his glance concentrated on Hunter.

"Oatmeal or hominy?" said the waiter at his back.

"One moment." He raised his hand, and the gesture concentrated the attention of the table on him. "Why, how do *you* do, Jim Hunter?" he said, with every word cut sharp.

There was a breathless moment, and a nervous stirring under foot, as Hunter turned and looked at Stover. Their glances matched one another a long moment, and then Hunter, with an excess of politeness, said:

"Oh, hello — Stover."

Instantly there was a relieved hum of voices, and a clatter of cutlery.

"I'll take oatmeal now," said Stover calmly. Story, glancing over, saw two spots of scarlet standing out on his cheeks, and realized how near the moment had come to a violent scene.

"Dink, old gazabo," said Hungerford, as they walked over to chapel, "what are you going to do? You can't go about the whole time with a chip on your shoulder."

"Oh, yes, I can," said Dink between his teeth. "I'll stick right where I am. And I'd like to see Jim Hunter or any one else try that again on me!"

Hungerford shook his head.

"You know, Dink, you must see both sides. Now from Hunter's side, you've smashed all traditions, and given us a blow that may be a knockout, considering the state of feeling in the college. Hunter's a society man, believes in them heart and soul."

"Then let him come to me and say what he thinks."

"Are you quite sure, Dink," said Joe, with a glance, "that there isn't some other reason for the way you two feel about each other?"

"You mean jealousy?" said Dink, flushing a little. "Bob's sister? Yes, there's that. But from the first we've been on opposite sides." He hesitated a moment, and then asked: "I say, Joe, what does Bob think about what I've done? Tell me straight."

"Of course he respects you," said Hungerford carefully, "more now than I think he did last year, but — Bob's a society man — all these Andover fellows are brought up in the idea, you know — and I think it's kind of a jolt."

"I suppose it is," said Stover, with a little depression.

He would like to have asked Hungerford to state his case to Jean Story, but he lacked the courage of his boyish impulse. The thought of Jean Story, as he sat in chapel, came to him like a temptation. The Judge was of the Skull and Bones alumni, Bob was sure to go; all the influences about her were of belief in the finality of that judgment.

"Yes, and Hunter will go in with sailing colors; he'll never risk anything," he said bitterly, "and I'll stand up and take my medicine, for doing what? For showing I had a backbone. But no one will ever know it outside. They'll think it's something wrong in my character — they always do. Stover, Yale's star end, misses out for Bones! That's the slogan. Cheating at cards or bumming. I wonder what she'll think? Lord, that's the hard part!"

For a week, proud as Lucifer, on edge for an opportunity, he stuck it out at the eating-joint, knowing the hopelessness of it all — that what he wanted had gone, and no amount of bravado could make him wink the fact, that in the midst of his own crowd, where he had stood as a leader, he was now regarded as an outsider.

In the second week he gave up the useless fight, and went to Commons, to the table where Regan, Gimbel, and Brockhurst ate. They forebore to ask him the reasons of the change, and he gave no explanation. That something had happened which had caused him to break away from his society was soon a matter of common rumor, and several incorrect versions circulated, all vastly to his credit. His influence in the body of the class was correspondingly increased, and Gimbel once or twice approached him with offers to run him for manager of the crew or the Junior Prom.

One day, about a month after his withdrawal, when,

"REGAN WAS HIS ONE FRIEND"—*Page 288.*

bundled up in his dressing-gown, he went shuffling into the basement for a cold tub, he had quite a shock, that brought home visually to him the realization of the price he had paid.

It had been the practise from long custom to inscribe on the walls tentative lists of the probable selections from the class for the three senior societies. On this particular list his name had stood at the head from the beginning, and the constant familiar sight of it had always brought him a warm, secure pleasure.

All at once, as he looked at it, he perceived a leaden blur where his name had stood, and the names of Bain and Hunter heading the list.

"I suppose they've got me down among the last now," he said, with a long breath. He searched the list, his name was not even on it. This popular estimation of what he himself believed had nevertheless power to wound him deeply.

"Well, it's so — I knew it," he said; but it was said in bitterness, with a newer and keener realization.

He began indeed to feel like an outsider, and, rebelling against the injustice of it all, to set his heart in bitterness. Hungerford and Bob Story, Dopey McNab often, tried to keep up with him, but, understanding their motives, he was proudly sensitive, and sought rather to avoid them.

Meanwhile the opposition to the sophomore societies reached the point of open revolt, and a mass meeting was held, which, as had been planned, caused a stir throughout the press of the country, and brought in from the alumni a storm of protest.

Stover, himself, despite his inclination to come forward in direct opposition, after a long debate, remained silent, feeling bound by the oath he had given at his initiation.

Shortly after the news spread like wildfire that the President, taking cognizance of the intolerable state of affairs, had summoned representatives of the three sophomore societies before him, and given them a month to deliberate and decide on some scheme of reform that would be comprehensive and adequate.

Rightly or wrongly, Stover felt that these developments intensified the feeling of the society element against him. A few weeks outside the boundaries, despite all his bravado, had brought home to him how much he cared for the companionship of those from whom he had separated.

Regan was his one friend; Brockhurst stimulated him; and in the intercourse with Swazey, Pike, Lake, Ricketts, and others he had found a certain inspiration. But after all, the men of his own kind — Story, Hungerford, and others, whom from pride he now avoided — were largely the men of the society crowd. They spoke a language he understood, they came from a home that was like his home, and their judgment of him would go with him out into the new relations in life.

It was a time of depression and bitter revolt at what he knew was the injustice of his ostracism, forgetting how much was of his own proud choosing.

He wandered from crowd to crowd, rather taciturn and restless, seeking diversion with a consuming nervousness. The new restlessness of spirit drove him away from the conferences in Regan's and Swazey's rooms to the company of idlers. For a period, in his pride and bitterness, he let go of himself, flung the reins to the wind, and started down hill with a gallop.

In pursuance of his policy of open defiance, he chose to appear at Mory's with the wildest element of the class. His companions were a little in awe of his grim, concen-

trated figure; when he sat into a game of poker or joined a table of revelers, he did it with no zest. He never joined in the chorus, and if he occasionally broke out into a boisterous laugh, there was always a jarring note to it, that caused his companions to glance at him uneasily. With the impetuousness of his nature, he outstripped his associates, plunging deeper and deeper, obstinately resolved, into the black gulf of his cynicism. In a week his excesses became college gossip, and, unknown to Stover, the subject of many long conferences among his friends.

One Friday night, as, straying aimlessly from room to room, he set out for Mory's in quest of Tom Kelly and a group of Sheff pagans, he was trudging along the hard ways in front of Welch Hall, fists sunk in his pockets, head down under a slouch hat, when he chanced on Tom Regan coming out of the Brick Row.

"Hello there, bantam," said Regan, with the prerogative of his size.

"Hello, Tom," he said, but without enthusiasm, for he had rather avoided him in company with the rest of his old friends.

"That's a deuced cordial greeting! Where are you bound, stranger?"

"Mory's."

"Mory's," said Regan, appearing to consider. "Good idea. I've got a hankering after a toby of musty ale and a rabbit myself. Wait till I stow these books and I'll join you."

Stover stood frowning, suspicious and rebelling, for at that age it is a point of honor, when a man of the world resolves to run his head against a stone wall, that any interference from a friend is regarded as an unwarranted insult.

"He thinks he'll try the big brother act on me," he said, scowling. He was not in a particularly good humor, nor was his head clear from several nights that had gone their reeling way.

When they entered Mory's, Tom Kelly, Dopey McNab, and Buck Waters were already grouped in the inner room.

"Well, old flinthead, how do you feel after last night?" said Kelly, making room for them.

"Fine," said Dink mendaciously, secretly pleased at the tribute to his sporting talents before Regan.

"More'n I can say," said Dopey, affectionately feeling of his head. "Curse the man who invented fish-house punch."

"Get home all right?" continued Kelly.

"Sure."

"I had a little tiff with a cop. If he'd been smaller, I'd have taken his shield away. He was most impudent. Never mind, I beat him in a foot race."

"Cocktails," said Stover, resolved that Regan should be well punished. "Make it two for me, Louis, I'll have to catch up."

"I'll stick to a toby and a rabbit," said Regan, without a change of expression.

"Cocktail, Dopey?" continued Stover, with a millionaire gesture.

"I never refuse," said Dopey, who planned to go through life on that virtuous method.

With such a beginning, matters progressed with remarkable facility. Stover, taciturn and in an ugly mood, constantly hurried the rounds, matching drink for drink, secretly resolved to prove his supremacy here as elsewhere. Regan, after two tobies, withdrew from the

contest, sitting silently puffing on his huge pipe, but without attempt at interference. Bob Story and Hungerford came in, and went away with a glance at Stover's clouded face and Regan's stolid, unfathomable expression. When midnight arrived, and Louis came in with apologies to announce the closing, there was quite a reckoning to be paid.

Stover was the best of the lot, doggedly resolved to show no effects of what he had taken. He felt a haziness in his vision, and words that were spoken seemed to be whirled away without record, but his legs stood firm, and his head was still under control. Buck Waters and a Sheff man took Tom Kelly home by a circuitous route to avoid either a wrestling match or a foot race with too zealous members of the New Haven police force; and Stover had the fierce pride of showing Regan that he could take charge of the hilarious but wabbly Dopey McNab, who, moved by the finest feelings of the brotherhood of man, was determined to scatter his superfluous change among his brother beings.

With great dignity and impressiveness, Stover, supporting one side, continued to give foggy directions to Regan on the other, until, come to McNab's quarters, they delivered that joyously exuberant person into his bed, propped up his head, opened the window, locked the door and left the key outside, to insure the termination of the night's adventure.

Stover went down the steep, endless stairs with great deliberation and minute pains.

"Dopey's got weak head — no good — stand nothing," he said seriously to Regan.

"Well, we've fixed him up for the night," said Regan cheerily. "You've got a wonderful top, old sport."

"I'm pretty good — Dopey's got the weak head," said Stover, taking his arm. "I'm good, I can put 'em under the table — all under the table."

"Good for you."

"Tom, you aren't — aren't in critical at-attochood, are you?" said Dink, with all feeling of resentment gone.

"Lord, no, boy."

"'Cause it does me good — this does me good. I feel bad — pretty bad, Tom, about some things. You don't know — can't tell — but I feel bad — this does me good — forget — you understand."

"I understand."

"You're a good friend, Tom. They don't understand — no one else understands. I'd like to shake hands. Thank you. Good night."

They had come opposite the Brick Row, and Regan, knowing the other's true condition, would have preferred to see him along to his room. But he knew of old the danger of making mistakes, so he said:

"Feel all right, old bantam?"

"Fine." Stover took a step or two, and then returned. "I put 'em to bed, didn't I?"

"You certainly did."

"Never 'fects me."

"You're a wonder."

"I thank you for your company."

"Good night."

Stover, intent only on making his entry, a hundred yards away, felt a roaring in his ears, and sudden jumble and confusion before him.

"Must get there — self-control — that's it, self-control," he said to himself, and by a supreme effort he reached his entry, pushed open the door, and, stumbling in out of Regan's vision, sat heavily down on the steps.

"'CURSE THE FELLOW WHO INVENTED FISH-HOUSE PUNCH'"
—*Page 290.*

Some indistinct time after he beheld before him a little spectacled figure in pink pajamas.

"Who are you?" he said.

"Wookey, sir."

"What's your class?"

"Freshman, sir."

"Very well. All right. You can help me — help me up. You know me?"

"Yes, sir."

The pink pajamas approached, and with an effort he rose, and, grasping the proffered shoulder, tumbled up the steps. When he reached his room his mind seemed to clear a moment, like the sudden drifting to and fro of a fog.

"Who are you?" he said, frowning.

"Wookey, sir."

"Where do you room?"

"On the first landing, sir."

"Why do you wear pink ones?"

The little freshman, hero-worshipper, face to face with his first great emotion, the conduct of an intoxicated man, blurted out:

"Don't you like 'em, sir?"

"Keep 'em on," said Stover magnanimously. "So you're a freshman."

"Yes, sir."

Suddenly he felt impressed with his duty, his obvious duty to one below him.

"Freshman," he said thickly, "I want you listen to me. Never drink to excess — understand. You beginning college — school of character — hold on yourself — lead a good life — self-control's the great thing — take it from me — understand?"

"Yes, sir," said Wookey, awed and a little frightened

at the service he was rendering to the great Dink Stover.

"That's all," said Stover benignly. "Is — is my bedroom still there?"

"Yes, sir."

"You may lead me to it."

When he had been brought to his bed he recalled the pink pajamas, and said:

"I thank you for your courtesy and your kindness." Then he said to himself: "It does me good — forget — happy now."

A moment later the fog closed over his consciousness again and he was asleep.

CHAPTER XXI

NIGHT after night, Wookey, the little freshman from a mountain village of Maine, the shadow of a grind, whom no one knew in his class, and who would never know any one, waited over his books the hour of twelve and the arrival of the great man gone wrong, whose secret only he possessed. Sometimes at the clatter on the stairs, when he went out eagerly, the hero would be in control, and would say:

"Hello, Wookey, how are you to-night?"

"All right, sir," he would answer, shifting from foot to foot, afraid to volunteer assistance.

"All right myself," Stover would answer. "See you to-morrow. Good night."

Gradually, however, to his delight, Stover grew to like the strange meetings, and permitted him to accompany him to his room to open the window, draw off the boots and disappear with the promise to thunder on his door in time for chapel. In the daytime they never met.

Stover never failed to thank him with the utmost ceremony. Often the dialogue that ensued was farcically humorous, only little Wookey, solemn as an owl, never laughed.

One night Stover, draped in difficult equilibrium on the mantelpiece, suddenly, in his new parental solicitude for the freshman, bethought himself of the curriculum.

"Wookey."

"Yes, sir."

"One thing must speak about — meant speak about long time ago."

"What, sir?" said Wookey, looking up apprehensively over his spectacles.

"Study," said Stover, with terrific solemnity. "Want you be good scholar."

"Oh, yes, sir."

"Want you be validict — you understand what mean?"

"Yes, sir."

"Wookey, college life serious, finest thing in it's study, don't neglect study, you understand."

"Yes, sir; I do study pretty hard."

"Not enough," said Stover furiously. "Study all time! What 'cher do to-day? Recite in — in Greek, Latin, eh?"

"Yes, sir — all right."

"Good, very good — proud of you, Wookey," said Stover, satisfied. "Must be good influence — understand that, Wookey. Going to ask every night."

"Yes, sir."

"All right. Go an' study now. Study lot more."

This feeling of the influence he was exerting for Wookey's academic betterment was so strong in Dink when the hour of midnight had passed that shortly after he brought McNab home with him to witness his works.

When Wookey appeared, something displeased Stover. His protégé was not as he should be presented. Suddenly he remembered — Wookey was not in the pink pajamas!

"Wookey," he said sternly.

"Yes, sir."

"The pink ones," he said solemnly.

"Very well, sir."

"Hurry."

"Yes, sir."

"Study's better in pink," said Stover wisely to McNab, who was trying to exceed him in dignity. "Most becomin'."

"Aha!"

"Make him study, Dopey," continued Stover. "I make him study."

"Want hear 'm reshite," said McNab, unconvinced.

When Wookey, in changed costume, came puffing upstairs, books under his arm, McNab, who had been exhorted by Stover, viewed the pink pajamas with deliberation, and said:

"Like you in pink, Wookey; always wear 'em. Want to hear you reshite."

"Reshite," said Stover.

"Hold up," said Dopey, scratching his head.

"What's matter?"

"Where going to sleep?"

"Wookey, suggestions?" said Stover, who added in a thundering whisper to McNab, "Always leave such things to Wookey."

The freshman busily took down the cushions from the window seat, piled up the pillows at one end before the fire, and brought up a rug.

"Thank Mr. Wookey," said Stover severely.

"Mr. Wookey, I thank you," said McNab, who sat down tailor fashion, and, staring at a book of geometry open on his lap, said: "I'm most — interested — most, very fond of Horace — reshite."

Wookey in the pink pajamas, seated in a sort of spinal bend, overwhelmed by the terrifying delight of being admitted to the company of Olympians, began directly to translate an ode of Horace.

McNab, staring at the geometry, turned a casual page, remarking from time to time severely:

"What's that! — oh, yes, h'm — quite right — free, rather free, Dink — not bad, not bad for freshman."

"Is it all right?" said Stover anxiously.

"All right."

"All my influence," said Stover.

"Wookey," said McNab, as a judge would say it, "very fortunate, sir, have such good infloonce. Congrath-ulate you."

Wookey, whether deceived by their drunken assumption of sobriety, or to conciliate dangerous men, remained in his corner, his book closed, blinking out from his wide glasses.

McNab, remembering the beginning of a discussion in which he had engaged with serious purpose, suddenly began, shaking his head:

"Dink, you ought be better infloonce than y'are."

Stover chose to be offended.

"Why you say that?"

"'Cause 'm right; y'oughtn't drink, not a drop!"

"What right you got to say that?"

"Every right — every," said McNab, trying to remember what was the original destination of his argument. "I'm bad example 'n you're good infloonce, there's diff, see?"

"Ratsh!"

"I remember," said McNab all at once. "I know what I want say. I'm going to leave it to Wookey. Wookey'll be the judge — referee — y'willin'?"

"Willin'."

"'M going to give moral lecture," said McNab rapidly, then paused and considered a long while. "I'm fond of Stover, Wookey, very fond — very worried, too, want

him to stop drinking — bad for him — bad for any one, but bad for him!"

Stover, who could still perceive the argument, laughed a disagreeable laugh.

"He's laughin' at me, Wookey," said McNab in a grieved voice. "He means by that insultin' laugh that I sometimes drink excess. I admit it; I'm not proud of it, but I admit it. But there's a difference, and here's where you ref'ree, judge. When I take 'n occasional glass, I drink to be happy, make others happy — y'understand, excesh of love for humanity, enjoy youth an' all that sort of thing, you know. That's the point — you're ref'ree. When Stover drinks he goes at in bad way, no love humanity, joy of youth. That's the point, y'understand. I want him to stop it, 'cause he's my friend, he's good infloonce — I'm bad example."

"You're my friend?" said Stover, overcome.

"You're besh friend."

"Shake hands."

"Shure."

"Dopey, I tell you truth — confide in you," said Stover, slipping down beside him. "Swear."

"Swear."

"Never tell."

"Never!"

"I'm unhappy."

"No!"

"Drink to forget, y'understand."

"Must stop it," said McNab, firmly closing one eye, and gazing fearfully at the yellow owls in front.

"Going to shtop it," said Stover, "soon — stop soon — promise."

"Promish?"

"Promise! Y'understand, want to forget."

"Must stop it," repeated McNab, turning from the yellow-eyed owls to Stover.

"Promish," repeated Stover solemnly. A moment later he said sleepily: "I shay."

"Shay it."

"What — what I going to stop?"

"What you, what —" McNab frowned terrifically at the owls. "Stop — must stop — promish — what — what stop?"

The question being transferred to Stover, he in turn scratched his head and sought to concentrate his memory.

"I promished," he said slowly, "remember that — stop — promish stop. Wookey!"

"Yes, sir."

The pink pajamas approached with reluctance, and waited at a safe distance.

"Wookey! What — what's this all about? What's it?"

Wookey, facing the crisis of his life, hesitated between two impulses; but at this moment the two took solemn hold of each other's hands, vacillated and rolled over on the cushions. Wookey, in the pink pajamas, covered them over with the rug, and stole out, like a thief, carrying away a secret.

But despite McNab's more sober remonstrances and his own proclamation, Stover did not cease his headlong gallop down the hill of Rake's Progress. He still avoided his old friends — he had not been to the Storys' home for weeks. Regan occasionally forced himself upon him, but never offered a suggestion. The truth was, Stover began to have a horror of his own society, of being left alone. What he did, he did without restraint. At the card tables to which he wandered he was always clamoring for

the raising of the limit; always ready to eat up the night. Even the most inveterate of the gamblers in his class perceived what McNab perceived, that there was no pleasure in what he did, but a sort of self-immolation. They were a little in awe of him, uneasy when he was around. He wandered over into Sheff, and among a group of hard livers in the Law School, getting deeper and deeper into the maelstrom. Several times, returning unsteadily late at night, he had met Le Baron, who stood aside, and watched him go with difficulty towards the haven of his own entry, for Stover always made it a point of pride to reach home and Wookey unaided. He never was offensive or quarrelsome. On the contrary, his struggle was always for self-control and an excess of politeness.

The climax arrived one Friday night when, having outlasted the party, he had put Tom Kelly to bed, and was returning from Sheff alone. He was very well pleased with himself. He had delivered Tom Kelly to his friends and gone away without assistance.

"Weak head, all weak head," he said to himself valiantly, "all but Stover, Dink Stover, old Rinky Dink. Self-control, great self-control. That's it, that's the point. Never taken home — walk myself — self-control." He began to laugh at the memory of Tom Kelly, who had insisted on going to bed with one boot under the pillow and his watch on the floor. The excruciating humor of it almost made him collapse. He clung to the nearest tree and wept for joy.

"Never hear end of it — Tom Kelly — boots — wonderful — poor old Tom —'n I walkin' home — alone."

Some one on the opposite sidewalk, seeing him clinging hilariously, stopped. Stover straightened up instantly, adjusted his hat and started off.

"Mustn't create false impression — all right! Street

corner — careful of street corner." He crossed with a run and a leap, and continued more sedately. "Know just what 'm doin'.

"Oh, father's mother
Pays all the bills,
'N I have all the fun."

Suddenly he remembered he was passing Divinity Hall, and broke off abruptly, raising his hat in apology.

"'Scuse me, no offense."

Then he considered anxiously:

"Mishtake — nothin' hilar-ious — might be Sunday." He tried to remember the day and could not. He stopped a laborer returning home with his bundle, and said ceremoniously:

"Beg your pardon, don't mean insult you, can you tell me what day the week it is?"

"Sure, me b'y," said the Irishman. "It's to-morrow."

"Thanks — sorry trouble you," said Stover, bowing. Then, pondering over the information, he started hurriedly on his way. "Knew it was late — must hurry."

When he came to the corner of the campus he raised his hat again to the chapel.

"Battell — believe in compulsory chapel — Yale democracy." He passed along College Street, saluting the various buildings by name. "Great inshtoostion — campus — Brocky's right — bring life back into campus, bring it all back. Things wrong now — everything's wrong — must say so — must stop an' fight, good fight. Regan's right 'n Swazey's right — all right. Hello, Donnelly. Salute!"

The campus policeman, lolling in the shadow of Osborne Hall, said:

"So there you are again, Dink. A fine life you're leadin'."

Stover felt this was an unwarranted criticism.

"Never saw any one take me home," he said. "Always manage get home. That's the point, that's it — see?"

"Go on with you," said Donnelly. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself — you who ought to be captain of the team."

Stover approached him.

"Bill — captain?"

"What?"

"I'm goin' to stop. Solemn promish."

He went into the campus and steadied himself against an elm, gazing down the long dim way to where in the shadow of the chapel was his entry.

"I see it — see it plainly — perfect self-control. What's that?" The trees seemed swollen to monstrous shapes, and the façades of the dormitories to be set on a slant, like the leaning tower of Pisa. He laughed cunningly: "Don't fool me — might fool Dopey — Tom Kelly — weak head — don't fool me — illushion, pure illushion — know all 'bout it. Worse comes worse, get down hands knees."

"Well, Dink, pickled again," said the voice of Le Baron from an outer world.

He straightened up, his mind coming back to his control, as it always did in the presence of others.

"All right," he said, leaning up against the cold, hard side of Phelp's, "bit of a party, that's all."

"Look here, Dink," said Le Baron, who was ignorant of the extent of the other's condition, "let's have a few plain words — man to man."

Stover heard him as from a distance, and nodded his head gravely.

"Good."

"We've had our break, but I've always respected you. You thought I was a snob then, and a damned aristocrat. Well, was I so far wrong? I believe in the best getting together and keeping together. You've chucked that and tried the other, haven't you? Now look where it's brought you."

Stover, his back to the wall, heard him with the clarity that sometimes comes. His head seemed to be among whirling mists, but every word came to him as though it alone were the only sound in a sleeping world. He wanted to answer, he rebelled at the logic, he knew it could be answered, but the words would not come.

"You're going to the devil, that's it in good English words," said Le Baron, not without kindness. "You ought to be the biggest thing in your class, and you're headed for the biggest failure. And it's all because you've cut loose from your crowd, Dink — from your own kind, because you've taken up with a bunch who don't count, who aren't working for anything here."

Suddenly Stover revolted, saying angrily:

"Hugh!"

"I don't want to hit you when you're down," said Le Baron quickly. "But, Dink, man alive, you're too good to go to the devil. Brace up — be a man. Get back to your own kind again."

"Hugh, that's enough!"

He said it sharply, and there was a finality about it.

"I say, Dink."

"Good night!"

He stood without moving until he had compelled Le Baron to leave, then he set out for his room. A great

anger swept over him — at himself, at the Dink Stover who had betrayed the cause, and given Le Baron the right to say what he did.

"It isn't that," he said furiously, "it's not for breaking 'way — democracy — standing on m' own feet, no! It's a lie, all a lie. It's m' own fault — damn you, Dink Stover, you're quitter!"

He marched into his entry, his head on fire, but clear with one last resolve, and thundered on Wookey's door.

"Come out!"

The pink pajamas flashed out as by magic. The little freshman, perceiving Stover's fierce expression, drew back in alarm.

"Go'n to help *you* up to-night — able to do it," said Dink, the idea of assistance to another mingling in some curious way with his great resolve.

He took Wookey firmly by the arm and assisted him up the stairs. Once in his room he motioned him to a chair.

"Sit down — somethin' to say to you!"

Wookey, frightened, calculating the chances to the door, huddled in the big arm-chair, his toes drawn up under him, his large eyes over the spectacles never daring to deviate from the imperious glance of Stover.

"Studied to-day?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good. Wookey, listen to me. I'm a quitter, you understand. I've fought fight — good fight — big fight — real democracy —'n then I lost nerve. I'm wrong; I'm all wrong. I know it. Fault's with me, not what fought for. Wookey, listen to me. Le Baron's wrong, all wrong, you understand; doesn't know — realize — see."

"Yes, sir," said Wookey, in terror and complete incomprehension.

"I'm fool — big fool, but that's over, y'understand. Never give Le Baron chance say again what he did tonight. 'M going fight again — good fight. An' no one's ever going say saw me like this again, y'understand."

"Yes, sir," said the freshman weakly, terrified at the passion that showed in Stover, rocking before the mantelpiece.

"Last time they ever get me this way!"

The green shaded lamp was burning on the table before him.

"The last time — by God," he said, and lifting his fist he drove it through the shattering glass, reeled, and stretched insensible on the floor.

On the following night, a Saturday, Kelly, Buck Waters, and McNab at Mory's set up a shout of welcome as Stover came in quietly:

"Good old Dink!"

"Hard old head."

"What is it, old boy? — get in the game."

"A toby of musty, Louis," he said, quietly sitting down.

McNab glanced at him, aware of something new in the sharp, businesslike movements, and the old determined lines of the lips.

"My round," said Buck Waters presently.

"Another toby for me," said Stover.

A little later Kelly rang on the table:

"Bring 'em in all over again."

"Not for me," said Stover. "I guess two'll be my limit from now on."

There was no protest. McNab surreptitiously, while the others were in an argument, leaned over and patted him on the knee.

CHAPTER XXII

WHAT Stover in his fuddled consciousness had said to little Wookey on that last wild night returned to him with doubled force in the white of the day. He had given his opponents the right to destroy all he had stood for by pointing to his own example. He had been a deserter from the cause, but the sound of the enemy's bugle had recalled him to the battle.

He took the first occasion to stop Le Baron, for he wanted the latter to make no mistake about him.

"Hugh, I was rude as the devil to you the other night," he said directly. "I was drunk — more than you had any idea. What I want you to know is this. You put the question right up to me. You've forced me to take my stand, and I've done it. You're all wrong on the argument, but I don't blame you. Only after this you'll never have the chance to fling that at me again. You and I'll never agree on things here, we're bound to be enemies, but I want to thank you for opening my eyes, putting it squarely up to me."

He left without waiting for an answer, having said what he wished to. For several days he kept by himself, taking long walks, disciplining the ship that had sailed so long in mutiny. Then he turned up in Regan's room, and holding out his hand, said:

"Well, Tom, it's over. How in blazes did you keep from telling me what you thought about me all this time?"

Regan, unruffled and undemonstrative, said through the cloud of his pipe:

"Well, I've seen men go through it before. You never were very bad."

"What?" said Stover, who felt rather annoyed at this tame estimate.

"It's not a bad thing when you've licked the devil four ways to election," said Regan. "You know what you can do, and that's something."

"Ever been through it?" said Stover, still a little piqued.

"Ye-es."

"Really, Tom?" said Dink amazed.

"Ran about six months," said Regan, crossing his legs and dreaming. "I wasn't nice and polite like you — used to clean up the place — rather ugly time, but I pulled out."

"You've never told me about yourself," said Stover tentatively.

Regan rose, reaching for the tobacco. "No, I never have," he said. "My story is one of those stories that isn't told. Come on over to Brocky's; he's got a debating scheme you'll be interested in."

"You damned unemotional cuss," said Stover, looking at him a little defiantly.

"Are you coming with me this summer to see a little real life — get a little real education?" said Regan irrelevantly.

"If you'll take me."

"Good boy."

He rested his hand on Stover's shoulder a moment, and gave him a little tap, and the touch brought a genuine thrill of happiness to Dink.

"Lord, what a leader he'd make," he thought. "Why is it, and what's the story the old rhinoceros can't tell, I wonder?"

The old crowd was at Brocky's, the crowd which had first stirred his imagination. His return produced quite a sensation. Nothing was said, but the grip in the handshakes was different, and the diffident, hesitant little expressions of relieved good-will that came to him touched him more than he would have believed.

Brockhurst began to expound his scheme, speaking nervously, in compressed sentences, as he always did in the beginning of an argument.

"Here's what I'm trying to say. We've all been sitting round and criticizing — I mean I have — things up here. Now why not really suggest something — worth while?" He frowned, and becoming angry at his own difficulty in expressing himself, gradually became more fluent. "We all feel the need of getting together and having real discussions, and we all agree that debating here has died out, become merely perfunctory. The debates take place in a class-room, and everything is cold, stiff, mechanical. Now that all is unnecessary. What we want is something spontaneous, informal and with the incentive of a contest. This is my scheme. To take a certain number — say twenty — of the men in the class who really have ideas, and believe in expressing them; form a club to meet one night a week in some room over a restaurant where we can sit about tables, smoke, have beer and lemonade, a bit to eat if you want, everything natural, informal. Divide the club up equally into two camps, each camp to have a leader for each debate, who opens the discussion and sums it up — the only formal, perfunctory speeches. Every one else speaks as

he feels like it, right from his table. Have in an outside judge, and keep a record. At the end of the year the side that loses sets the other up to a banquet."

Stover was interested at once. He saw an instrument at hand for which he had been looking — something to bring the class together.

"Look here, it's bigger than that, Brocky," he said earnestly. "I'm not criticizing — I like the idea, the whole thing, you know. But here's what we can do. Make the club, say, forty, and get into it all the representative elements of the class — make it a real meeting place. Get the fellows who are going to be managers and captains. They've all got to speak — the fellows on papers, the real debaters — and you'll have something that'll bring the class together."

"What would you debate?" said Swazey, while the others considered Stover's suggestion.

"College subjects every one has an opinion about at first," said Regan. "And then get into red-hot politics."

"Of course Stover's idea is a social one — democratic if you will," said Brockhurst perplexed. "My idea was for a more intimate crowd, all alike, trying to discuss real things."

"Brocky, I don't believe you can do it," said Stover. "My experience is that the big discussions, the ones worth while, always are informal, just as they've been in this crowd, and the crowd mustn't be too large." Several nodded assent. "The other thing is something we need in the class. We've been torn to pieces, all at loggerheads, and I believe, outside of the debating, this is the first step to getting together. Moreover, I think you'll find all crowds will jump at the chance. Let me talk it around."

"I think Dink's got the practical idea, Brocky," said Regan. "And, moreover, he's the man to work it."

As they went out together they were met with the sensation of the campus — the sophomore societies had been abolished!

Stover stopped McNab, who was hurrying past.

"I say, Dopey, is it true?"

"Sure thing."

"How'd it happen?"

"Don't know."

Gimbel came up with the full news.

"The President gave them a certain time, you remember, to submit a plan of reform. They reported they couldn't agree, so he called the committee together and said:

"'Well, gentlemen, I gave you the opportunity to conform to public sentiment, you haven't been able to do it, you are now abolished.'"

"Who'd have thought it!"

"You don't say so!"

"Abolished!"

"I know you're glad, Dink, old man," said Gimbel, shaking his hand with a confidential look. "We all know how you stood."

"It's for the best," said Stover slowly; then he added: "But Gimbel, the fight's over; the big thing now is for the class to get together — be careful how you fellows take it."

Strangely enough, in the hour of defeat the instinct of caste came back to him — he was again the sophomore society man. He walked over to his rooms with a curious feeling of resentment at the rejoicing on the campus, where the news was being shouted from window to win-

dow. Bob Story, leaving the fence, came over and took him by the arm.

"Dink, old fellow, I've been waiting to see you."

"I've just heard the news," said Stover, when they reached his room.

"That's not what I came about," said Story, "though it fits in all the better. Dink, you won't mind our clearing up a little past history?"

"I wish you would, Bob," said Stover earnestly. "I know you never saw things my way."

"No, I didn't. I don't say you were wrong. It was a question of different temperaments. You did a braver thing than I would have done—"

"Oh, I say—"

"Yes, I mean it. Of course I think it was all a rotten mistake, and that if you'd talked the matter out as you've done with me, Le Baron and Reynolds would have seen your side."

"Perhaps so."

"I felt that Reynolds had acted like an ass, and you very naturally had lost your temper — the result being to put the society in the position as a society of dictating a man's friendships. I don't believe that was justified."

"Indirectly, Bob, it worked out that way."

"There I believe you're right, Dink," said Story openly. "I've come to see it, and I admit it now. I'm glad the system has gone. I'm for the best here. Now, Dink,"— he hesitated a moment —"I know you've been through a rotten time; you've felt every one was against you unjustly. I know all that, and I know you've got hold of yourself again."

"That's true."

"What I want to talk over with you now is this.

Don't let what has passed keep you away from any one in the class."

"But, Bob," said Dink, amazed, "how can I help it? The soph crowd must be down on me — particularly now."

"Rats, they all know pretty well the circumstances, and they all respect your nerve, that's honest. We like a good fighter up here. Now, Dink, more than ever, we need a real leader here to bring us together again. Don't leave the field to Bain and Hunter — they're all right in their way, but they can't see things in a big way. Go right out where you've always gone, twice the man you used to be, and make us all follow you. Don't make apologies for what you did — go out as though you were proud of it, and the whole bunch will rise up and follow you."

"I get what you mean," said Stover solemnly. "That's horse sense, Bob — you've always got that. I wish you'd said it before."

"I wish I had."

Stover looked at him wondering, but not daring to ask if some one else had prompted him to the act.

"It's strange you came just now, Bob," he said. "You've put words in my mouth that were already there. I've just been talking over a scheme that I think's a big idea. It's Brockhurst's."

He detailed the plan and his own suggestion. Story was enthusiastic. They talked at length, drawing up a list of possible members, with the enthusiasm of pioneers.

"I say, Dink, there's one thing more," said Bob, as he started to go. "I've been thinking a lot lately about things here, and what I want for the next two years — this is about ended. I'd like to propose something to you."

"Propose it."

"What do you say to you and me, Joe Hungerford, and Tom Regan, all rooming together another year?"

"Tom?" said Stover, surprised a moment. "The very thing if he'd do it."

"The four of us are all different enough to make just the combination we need. I'm tired of bunking alone. I want to rub up against some one else."

"There's nothing I could have thought of better, Bob. You're right, we four ought to be friends — real friends — and stand together. Here's my hand on it."

"Bully. I've spoken to Joe, and he's going to see Regan. I say, Dink, drop in soon."

"Sure thing."

"I mean at the house."

"Oh, yes." A little constraint came to him, and then a flush of boyish hope. "I'm coming round."

"Because — the family have been wondering."

When Bob had gone, Stover stood a long while gazing at the excited groups about the fence, retailing the all-important news.

"By George, I'll do it," he said at last. "I'll not leave it to Tommy Bain or Jim Hunter. It may be a fight, but I'm going out to lead because I can do it, and because I believe in the right things." Then he thought over all the incidents of Bob's visit, and he fell into a musing state with sudden wild jumps of the imagination. "I wonder — did he come of his own accord — I wonder if she knew!"

With one of his old-time sudden resolves, he went that very night to the Storys'. The struggle he had come through in victory showed in a new, abrupt self-confidence. He felt older by a year than at his last visit.

Jean Story was at the piano, Jim Hunter on the wide

seat beside her, turning over the leaves of her music. He saw it from the hall in the first glance.

The Judge, surprised, came to him, delighted.

"Well, if here isn't Dink in the flesh. How are you? Thought you'd eloped somewhere. Glad to see you; tarnation if I'm not glad to shake your hand."

Hungerford, Bain, Bob Story, and Stone were present; a little difference in their several greetings.

"Well, we're holding a sort of wake here," said the Judge cheerily. "Bain seems the most afflicted."

"It's a hard moment," said Stover calmly, knowing that any expression of opinion from him would be resisted in certain quarters. "I felt quite upset myself to-day when I heard the news, despite the stand I've taken."

Hunter looked up and then down, but said nothing.

"It's for the best," said Hungerford, not wishing him to stand alone. "Best for the college as a whole."

"That remains to be seen," said Bain. "I passed Gimbel coming over, and his crowd. It wasn't very pleasant."

"Well, it's over," said Dink in a matter-of-fact tone. "No post-mortem! The great thing now is to recognize what exists. The class to-day is shot to pieces. We want to get together again. One half our time's up, and, wherever the fault, we've done nothing but scrap and get apart."

"I've been telling them a little about your scheme, yours and Brockhurst's," said Story.

Stover launched into an enthusiastic argument in its support. Bain and Hunter followed, instinctive in their opposition, each perceiving all the superiority that would derive to Stover from its success.

"May I ask," said Hunter finally, in a tone of icy

criticism, "What is the difference between knocking down the sophomore society and putting up this organization?"

"Very glad to tell you, Jim," said Stover, assuming an attitude of careful good-will. "The difference is that this is an open organization, drawing from every element of the class, to meet for the sole purpose of doing a little thinking and getting to know other crowds. The sophomore society was an organization drawn from one element of the class, consciously or unconsciously for the purpose of advancing the social ambitions of its members at the expense of others. One is natural and democratic, and the other's founded on selfishness and exclusiveness."

The Judge, fearing the results of a controversy, broke in, switching the conversation to safer channels.

"By the way, Jim," said Stover, in an interlude, "we're counting on you and Tommy Bain to go into this thing and make it a success. Is that right?"

Despite their reluctance at so prompt an espousal, Hunter and Bain were too far-seeing to set themselves in opposition. But the acceptance was given without enthusiasm, and, not relishing this sudden renewal of authority in one whom they naturally held at fault, they soon broke up the party.

Hungerford and Bob went into the billiard room for a game, and presently the Judge disappeared upstairs to run over some routine work.

Stover took the seat vacated by Hunter, with perhaps a little malicious pleasure, saying:

"Aren't you going on playing?"

The young girl hesitated a moment, turning the leaves aimlessly.

"I don't know," she said. "Do you want me to very much?"

"I'd much rather talk."

She closed the music, turning to him with a little reproachful seriousness.

"You've been away a long while."

"Yes." He admitted the implied accusation with a moment's silence. "A crazy spell of mine. Bob was over this afternoon and we had a long talk." He said it point blank, watching her face for some indication he hoped to find there of her complicity. "Did he tell you?"

"He was speaking of it at the dinner table," she said quietly.

"Did you blame me," he said impulsively, "for what I did about getting out of my society?"

"No."

"Bob did, at least for a while," he said, looking eagerly into her eyes.

"I did not agree with him there."

She rose.

"If we are going to talk, let's find more comfortable chairs."

He followed her, a little irritated at the sudden closing on this delightful prospect. They took chairs by the window. Through the vista of open rooms could be seen the glare of the brilliant lights, and the figures of the two young fellows moving at their game.

Suddenly, with a return of the old-time feeling of camaraderie between them, he burst out:

"You know I've got into such a serious point of view! I don't quite know how it happened. Sometimes it seems to me I'm missing all the fun of college life."

He made a gesture toward the billiard room. "Even fellows like McNab, good for nothing, jovial little loafers, according to Yale standards, do seem to be getting something wonderful out of these years. I don't. It's been all work or fighting."

"That's because they are going different ways in life than you are," she said quickly. "Tell me more about this new organization. It seems a big idea. Whom will you take in?" She added suddenly: "Take charge yourself, do it all yourself. It's just what you should do."

He was too much interested in the expounding of the idea to notice the solicitude she showed him. After a while the conversation drifted to other topics. He spoke of the summer.

"Joe wants me to go on a cruise, and Bob wants me to run up to your camp for a visit, but I've about decided to do neither."

She looked up.

"Why not?"

"I am going with Regan for the summer — slumming it, I suppose some would call it; Tom calls it getting real education. We're going down to work among men who work, to know something of what they think and want — and what they think of us. It appeals to me tremendously. I want to have an all-around point of view. There are so many opportunities coming now, and I want to grasp them all — learn all I can. What do you think?"

"It is a splendid idea, just the thing for you now. It will broaden you," she said, with a determined bob of her head. "Why doesn't Bob ever bring Regan around? He sounds interesting."

"Don't know — he sticks by himself. You can't

move him. Bob's told you about the four of us rooming together?"

"Yes."

"I wonder—"

"What?" she asked as he stopped.

"Did you suggest to Bob what he said to me this afternoon?" he said point blank.

She looked at him troubled and undecided, and he suddenly guessed the reason.

"Oh, won't you trust me enough to tell me," he said boyishly, "if you did?"

She looked into his eyes a moment longer.

"He was afraid you wouldn't like it," she said simply. "Yes, I told him to go."

A dozen things rushed to his lips, and he said nothing. Perhaps she liked his silence better than anything he could have said, for she added:

"You will do the big things now, won't you? You see, I want to see you at your biggest."

When he went home that night, he seemed to walk on air. He had taken no advantage of her friendship, tempted almost beyond his powers as he had been by the kindness in her voice and her direct appeal. He had to tell some one, not of the interest he felt she had shown him, but of his own complete adoration and supreme consecration. So he hauled Hungerford up to his room, who received the information as to Stover's state of mind with gratifying surprise, as though it were the most incredible, mystifying, and incomprehensible bit of news.

CHAPTER XXIII

WHEN Stover returned to college as a junior, he showed the results of his summer with Regan. He had gone into construction gangs, and learned to obey and to command. He had had a glimpse of what the struggle for existence meant in the stirring masses; and he had known the keenness of a little joy and the reality of sorrow to those for whom everything in life was real.

He had long ago surrendered the idea of entering Skull and Bones over the enmity of Reynolds and Le Baron, and this relinquishing somehow robbed him of all the awe that he had once felt. He had returned a man, tempered by knowledge of the world, distinguishing between the incidental in college life and the vital opportunity within his grasp.

The new debating club, launched in the previous spring, had been an instant success, and its composition, carefully representative, had become the nucleus of a new comradeship in the class. With the one idea of proving his fitness to lead in this new harmonizing development, Stover made his room a true meeting-place of the class, and, loyally aided by Hungerford and Story, sought to restore all the old-time zest and good-will to the gatherings about the sophomore fence. His efforts were met by a latent opposition from Hunter and Bain, on one side, who never outgrew their wounded resentment, and from Gimbel on the other, who, though enthusiastically seconding him in the open, felt secretly that he was being supplanted.

But, as Story had foreseen, Stover had the magnetism and the energy to carry through what no other leader would have accomplished. Once resolved on the accomplishment, upheld by a strong sentimental devotion, Stover went at his task with a blunt directness that disdains all objections.

Each Saturday night was given over to a rally of the class *en masse* at the Tontine. Certain groups held off at first, but soon came into the fold when Stover, who was no respecter of persons, would find occasion to say publicly:

"Hello there, what happened to you last night? Get out of that silk-lined atmosphere of yours! Wake up! You're not too good for us, are you?"

"Well, why weren't you there? It's no orgy — you can get lemonade or milk if you want. There are bad men present, but we keep 'em from biting."

"I say, forget your poker game for one night. We all know you're dead game sports. That's why we want you — to give us an atmosphere of real life."

The remarks were made half in jest, half in earnest, but they seldom failed of their object. At the Saturday night rallies it was the same. Stover was everywhere, saying with his good-humored, impudent smile what no one else dared to say, sometimes startling them with his boldness:

"Here now, fellows, no grouping around here. We want to see a sport and a gospel shark sitting arm in arm. Come on, Schley, your social position's all right — there's only one crowd here to-night. No one here is going to boost you into a senior society. Percolate, fellows, percolate. We've scrapped like Sam Hill, now we're tired of it. No more biting, scratching, or gouging. Don't forget this is a love feast, and they're going

to be lovelier. Now let's try over that song for the Princeton game. Bob Story perpetrated it — pretty rotten, I think, but let's hit it up all the same."

The rallies jumped into popularity. The class gasped, then laughed at Stover's abrupt reference to the late unpleasantness, and with the laugh all constraint went. The class found itself, as a regiment returns to its pride again. It went to the games in a body, it healed its differences, and packed the long room at the Tontine each Saturday night, shouting out the chorus which Buck Waters, McNab, Stone, and the talent led.

Many, undoubtedly, marvelling at the ease with which Stover had inspired the gathering, admired him for what they believed was a clever bid for society honors. But the truth was that he succeeded because he had no underlying motive, because he had achieved in himself absolute independence and fearlessness of any outer criticism, and his strength with the crowd was just the consciousness of his own liberty.

By the fall of junior year, he was the undisputed leader of the class, a force that had brought to it a community of interest and friendly understanding. Unknown to him, his classmates began to regard him, despite his old defiance, as one whom a senior society could not overlook. Stover had no such feeling. He believed that the hatred in what remained of the sophomore society organization was, and would continue, unrelenting, and this conviction had determined him in a course of action to which he was impelled by other reasons.

He went through the football season as he had gone through the previous season, with a record for distinguished brilliancy, acclaimed by all as the best end in years, the probable captain of the next year. He wanted

the position, as he had desired it on his first arrival at Yale, and yet he surrendered it. Hunter had developed into a tackle and made the team. In the class below were two men of the defunct sophomore societies. Stover had vividly before him the record of Dana, his captain of freshman year, and the memory of the ordeal after the game, when he had stood up and acknowledged his lack of leadership.

That this still resentful society element in the eleven would follow him with distaste and reluctance, despite all traditional loyality, he knew too well. Moreover, sure that he was destined to be passed over on Tap Day, he felt perhaps too keenly the handicap of such a rejection. Then, at the bottom, reluctantly, he knew in his heart that Regan was the born leader of men, and what once he had rebelled against he finally acknowledged.

So when at the end of a victorious season the members of the eleven gathered for the election of the next year's captain, he stood up immediately and stated his views. It was a difficult announcement to make, both on the score of seeming sentimentality, and from the danger of seeming to refuse what might not be offered him.

But during the tests of the last year the self-consciousness which would have prevented Brockhurst's expressing himself had completely gone. Determined on one course of action, to be his own master, to do what he wanted to do, and to say what he wanted to say, in absolute fearlessness, he spoke with a frankness that amazed his comrades, still under the fetish of upper-class supremacy.

"Before we begin," he said, "I've a few words I want to say. I suppose I am a candidate here. I don't say I shouldn't be crazy to have the captaincy. I would — any one would. What I say is that I have thought it

over and I withdraw my name. Even if you hadn't in Tom Regan here the best type of leader you could get, it would be very unfortunate for our chances next year if I were chosen. I'm quite aware that in a certain element of the team, due to the open stand I felt forced to take in the question of the sophomore society, there is a great deal of resentment against me. I can understand that; it is natural. But there should be no such division in a Yale team. We've got a tough fight next year, and we need a captain about whom are no enmities, who'll command every bit of the loyalty of the team —" he paused a moment —" and every bit of help he can get from the college. I move that Tom Regan be unanimously elected captain."

There was quite an outcry at the end of his declaration, especially from Regan, who was utterly surprised. But Stover held firm, and perceived, not without a little secret resentment, that the outcome came with relief not only to the team but to the coaches.

When they returned, and Regan was still protesting, Stover said frankly:

"Look here, Tom, we don't split hairs with one another. If I had thought it was right for me to stand for it I would have. I wanted it — like hell. You remember Dana? I do. It's an awful thing to lead a team into defeat, and say I was responsible. I don't care to do it. Besides, you are the better man — and I'm of such a low, skulking nature I hate to admit it. So shut up and buy me a rabbit at Mory's. I'm hungry as a pirate."

He had said nothing of his determination to any one. He had been tempted to talk it over with Jean Story, but he had refrained, feeling instinctively that in her ambition for him, and in her inability to judge the depth

of certain antagonisms towards him, she would oppose his determination.

The four friends had gone to Lyceum together — Swazey and Pike were in the same building. There was a certain flavor of the simplicity and ruggedness of old Yale in the building that gave to the meetings in their rooms a character of old-time spontaneity.

By the opening of the winter term, Stover, the enthusiast, had begun to see the weakness of movements that must depend on organization. The debating club, which had started with a zest, soon showed its limitations. Once the edge of novelty had worn off, there were too many diverting interests to throng in and deplete the ranks.

When, following Regan's suggestion, they had attempted a new division on the lines of the political parties, the result was decidedly disappointing. There was no natural interest to draw upon, and the political discussions, instead of fanning the club into a storm of partizanship, lapsed into the hands of perfunctory debaters.

Regan himself took his disillusionment much to heart. They discussed the reasons of the failure one stormy afternoon at one of their informal discussions, to which they had returned with longing.

"What the devil is the matter?" said the big fellow savagely. "Why, where I come from, the people I see, every mother's son of them, feed on politics, talk nothing else — they love it! And here if you ask a man if he's a Republican or a Democrat, he writes home and asks his father. A condition like this doesn't exist anywhere else on the face of the globe. And this is America. Why?"

When he had propounded the question, there was a busy, unresponsive puffing of pipes, and then Pike added:

"That's what hits me, too. Just look at the questions that are coming up; popular election of senators, income tax, direct primaries; it's like building over the government again, and no one here cares or knows what's doing. I say, why?"

"There may be fifty-two reasons for it," said Brockhurst, in his staccato, biting way. "One is, our colleges are all turning into social clearing houses, and every one is too absorbed in that engrossing process to know what happens outside; second is the fact that our universities are admirably organized instruments for the prevention of learning!"

"Good old Brocky," said Swazey with a chuckle. "Just what I like; stormy outside, warm inside, and Brocky at the bat. Serve 'em up."

Brockhurst, who was used to this reception of his pointed generalizations, paid no heed. He, too, had grown in mental stature and in control. A certain diffidence was over him, and always would be; but when a subject came up that interested him, he forgot himself, and rushed into the argument with a zeal that never failed to arouse his listeners.

Brockhurst turned on Swazey with the license that was always permissible.

"Well, what do you know? You've been here going on three years. You are supposed to be more than half educated. And you're not a fair example either, because you really are seeking to know something."

"Well, go on," said Swazey, thoroughly aroused.

"What do you know about the Barbizon school, and the logical reasons for the revolt of the impressionists?"

Instantly there was an outcry:

"Not fair."

"Oh, I say."

"That's no test."

"Finishing your third year, gentlemen," said Brockhurst triumphantly, "age over twenty; the art of painting is of course known to the aborigines only in its cruder forms. Well, does any one know at least who Manet is, or what he's painted?"

There was an accusing silence.

"Of course you've an idea of the Barbizon school — one or two of you. You remember something about a Man with a Hoe or the Angelus — that's Sunday supplement education. Now let me try you. Please raise hands, little boys, when you know the answer to these questions, but don't bluff teacher. I'm not contending you should have a detailed knowledge of the world in your eager, studious minds. I am saying that you haven't the slightest general information. I'll make my questions fair.

"First, music: I won't ask you the tendencies and theories of the modern schools — you won't know that such a thing as a theory in music exists. You know the opera of Carmen — good old Toreadore song. Do you know the name of the composer? One hand — Bob Story. Do you know the history of its reception? Do you know the sources of it? Do you know what Bach's influence was in the development of music? Did you ever hear of Leoncavallo, Verdi, or that there is such a thing as a Russian composer? Absolute silence. You have a hazy knowledge of Wagner, and you know that Chopin wrote a funeral march. That is your foothold in music; there you balance, surrounded by howling waters of ignorance.

"Take up architecture. Do you know who built the Vatican? Do you know the great buildings of the world — or a single thing about Greek, Roman and Renaissance architecture? Do you know what the modern French movement is based upon? Nothing.

"Take up religion. Do you know anything about Confucius, Shintoism, or Swedenborg, beyond the names? Of course you would not know that under Louis XVI a determined movement was made to reunite the Catholic and Protestant branches, which almost succeeded. That's unfair, because of course it is the forerunner of the great religious movement to-day. Do you know the history of the external symbols of the Christian religion, and what is historically new? Darkness denser and denser.

"Take literature. You have excavated a certain amount of Shakespeare, and grubbed among Elizabethans, and cursed Spenser. Who has read Taine's History of English Literature, or known in fact who Taine is? Only Bob Story. And yet there is the greatest book on the whole subject; you could abolish the English department and substitute it. Beside Story, who else has had even a fair reading knowledge of any other literature — Russian, Norwegian, German, French, Italian? Who knows enough about any one of these writers to look wise and nod; Renan, Turgeniev, Daudet, Björnson, Hauptman, Suderman, Strindberg? Do you know anything about Goethe as a critic, or the influence of Poe upon French literature? What do you know? I'll tell you. You know Les Misérables and The Three Musketeers in French literature. You know Goethe wrote Faust. You're beginning to know Ibsen as a name, and one may have read Tolstoi, and all know that he's a very old man with a long white beard, who lives among his

peasants, has some queer ideas, and has started to die three or four times. The papers have told you that.

"Take another field, of simple curiosity on what is doing in a world in which by opportunity you are supposed to be of the leading class. What do you know about the strength and spread of socialism in Germany, France and England? In the first place no one of you here probably has any idea of what socialism is; you've been told it's anarchy, and, as that only means dynamite to you, you are against socialism, and will never take the trouble to investigate it. What do you know about the new political experiments in New Zealand? — nothing. What do you know about the labor pension system in Germany, or the separation of the church and state in France? — all subjects dealing with the vital development of the race of bipeds on this earth of which you happen to be members.

"Now here is a catch question — all candidates for the dunce-cap will take a guess. The Botticelli story is such a chestnut now that you all know that it isn't a cheese or a wine — credit that to ridicule. I'm going to give you a few names from all the professions, and let's see who can tag them. What was Spinoza, Holman Hunt, Dostoiefski, Ambrose Thomas, Savonarola (if you've read the novel you'd know that), Bastien Le Page, Zorn, Bizet, Bossuet! Unfair? — not at all. These things are just as necessary to know to a man of education and culture as it is to a man of good manners to realize that peas are not introduced into the mouth by being balanced on a knife."

"Help!" cried Hungerford, as Brockhurst went rushing on. "Great Scott, what *do* we know?"

"You know absolutely nothing," said Brockhurst savagely. "Here you are; look at yourselves — four

years when you ought to learn something, some informing knowledge of all that has developed during the four thousand years the human race has fought its way toward the light, four years to be filled with the marvel and splendor of it all, and you don't know a thing.

"You don't know the big men in music; you don't know the pioneers and the leaders in any art; you don't know the great literatures of the world, and what they represent; you don't know how other races are working out their social destinies; you've never even stopped to examine yourselves, to analyze your own society, to see the difference between a civilization founded on the unit of the individual, and a civilization, like the Latin, on the indestructible advance of the family. You have no general knowledge, no intellectual interests, you haven't even opinions, and at the end of four years of *education* you will march up and be handed a degree — Bachelor of Arts! Magnificent! And we Americans have a sense of humor! Do you wonder why I repeat that our colleges are splendidly organized institutions for the prevention of learning? No, sir, we are business colleges, and the business of our machines is to stamp out so many business men a year, running at full speed and in competition with the latest devices in Cambridge and Princeton!"

"Brocky, you are terrific," said Swazey in admiration. There was too much truth in the attack, violent as it was, not to have called forth serious attention.

"I feel a good deal the way you do," said Bob Story, and Stover nodded, "only it seems to me, Brocky, a good deal of what you're arguing for must come from outside — in just such informal talks as this."

"That's true," said Brockhurst. "If the stimulus in the college life itself were toward education all our meet-

ings would be educational. It's true abroad, it isn't here. You know my views. You think I'm extreme. I'm getting an education because I didn't accept any such flap-doodle as, 'What am I going to do for Yale?' but instead asked, 'What has Yale got to offer me?' I'm getting it, too."

Stover suddenly remembered the conversation they had together the year before, and looking now at Brockhurst, revealed in a new strength, he began to understand what had then so repelled him.

"The great fault," continued Brockhurst, "lies, however, with the colleges. The whole theory is wrong, archaic and ridiculous — the theory of education by schedule. All education can do is to instil the love of knowledge. You get that, you catch the fire of it — you educate yourself. All education does to-day is to develop the memory at the expense of the imagination. It says: 'Here are so many pounds of Greek, Latin, mathematics, history, literature. In four years our problem is to pass them through the heads of these hundreds of young barbarians so that they will come out with a lip knowledge.'"

"But come, we do learn something," said Hungerford.

"No, you don't, Joe," said Brockhurst. "You've translated the Iliad — you've never known it. You've recited in Horace — you have no love for him. You've excavated the plays of Shakespeare, a couple of acts at a time; you don't know what Hamlet means or Lear, the beauty of it all has escaped you. You've *recited* in Logic and Philosophy, but you don't understand what you're repeating. You're only *repeating* all the time. Your memory is trained to hold a little knowledge a little time — that's all. You don't enjoy it, you're rather apologetic — or others are."

"Well, what other system is there?" said Regan.

"There is the preceptorial system of England," said Brockhurst, "where a small group of men are in personal contact with the instructor. In French universities, education is a serious thing because failure to pass an examination for a profession means two extra years of army service. Men don't risk over there, or divide up their time heeling the *News* or making a team. In Germany a man is given a certain number of years to get a degree, and I believe has to do a certain amount of original work.

"But of course the main trouble here is, and there is no blinking the fact, that the colleges have surrendered unconsciously a great deal of their power to the growing influence of the social organization. In a period when we have no society in America, families are sending their sons to colleges to place themselves socially. Some of them carry it to an extreme, even directly avow their hope that they will make certain clubs at Princeton or Harvard, or a senior society here. It probably is very hard to control, but it's going to turn our colleges more and more, as I say, into social clearing houses. At present here at Yale we keep down the question of wealth pretty well; fellows like Joe Hungerford here come in and live on our basis. That's the best feature about Yale to-day — how it will be in the future I don't know, for it depends on the wisdom of the parents."

"Social clearing house is well coined," said Hungerford. "I think it's truer though of Harvard."

"That's perhaps because you see the mote in your neighbors' eyes," said Brocky rising. "Well, discussion isn't going to change it. Who's always talking about school for character — Pike or Brown? We might as well stand for that — but it would not be very wise to

announce it to the American nation, would it? — we might be dubbed a reformatory. Fathers, send your sons to college — reform their characters, straighten out the crooks. At the end give 'em a degree of — of, say — G. B."

"What's that, Brocky?" said Swazey, grinning with the rest.

"Good Boy," said Brockhurst, who departed, as he liked, on the echoes of the laugh which he had inspired.

"Whew!" said Hungerford, with a comical rubbing of his head. "What struck me?"

"And I expect to make Phi Beta Kappa," said Swazey, with an apologetic laugh.

"What a dreadfully disconcerting person," said Bob Story.

"By George, it takes the conceit out of you," said Stover ruthfully. "Shall we all start in and learn something? What's the answer?"

At this moment a familiar slogan was heard below, increasing in riotous, pagan violence with the approach of boisterous feet.

"Oh, father and mother
Pay all the bills,
And we have all the fun.
Hooray!
That's the way we do in college life —
In college life."

The room burst into a roar of laughter.

"There's one answer," said Regan rising.

The door slammed open, and McNab and Buck Waters reeled in arm in arm.

"I say, fellows, we've cornered the sleigh market,"

said Dopey uproariously. "We're all going to beat it to the Cheshire Inn, a bottle of champagne to the first to arrive. Are you on?"

Half an hour later, Stover at the reins was whirling madly along the crusty roads, in imminent danger of collision with three other rollicking parties, who packed the sleighs and cheered on the galloping horses, singing joyfully the battle hymn of the pagans:

"Oh, father and mother
Pay all the bills,
And we have all the fun.
Hooray!
That's the way we do
In college life."

CHAPTER XXIV

ONCE Stover had reconciled himself to the loss of a senior society election, he found ample compensation in the absolute liberty of action that came to him. It was not that he condemned this parent system; he believed in it as an honest attempt to reward the best in the college life, a sort of academic legion of honor, formed not on social cleavage, but given as a reward of merit. In his own case, he believed his own personal offending in the matter of Le Baron and Reynolds had been so extreme that nothing could counteract it.

So he gave himself up to the free and untrammelled delights of living his own life. His fierce stand for absolute democracy made of his rooms the ante-room of the class, through which all crowds seemed to pass, men of his own kind, socially calculating, glad to be known as the friends of Regan, Hungerford and Story, all rated sure men, and Stover, about whom they began to wonder more and more, as a unique and rebellious personality, which, contrary to precedent, had come to bear down all opposition. Gimbel and Hicks, elected managers for the coming year, came often, willing to conciliate the element they had fought, in the hopes of a favorable outcome on Tap Day. Men who worked their way dropped in often on Regan; Ricketts, with his drawling Yankee astuteness, always laughing up his sleeve; twenty odd, lonely characters, glad to sink into a quiet corner and listen to the furious discussions that raged about Brockhurst, Story and Regan.

It was seldom that Stover talked. He learned more by listening, by careful weighing of others' opinions, than in the attempt to classify his own thoughts through the medium of debate. At times when the discussion wandered from vital sources, he would ask a question, and these sharp, direct remarks had a pertinency and a searching trenchancy that sometimes upset an elaborate argument.

Regan brought him to the romance of commonplace things, to a genuine interest and study of political conditions; Brockhurst irritated and dissatisfied him, and so stimulated him to reading and self-analysis; Story, with his seriousness and fairness, recalled him always to a judicial point of view and an understanding of others; Hungerford, with his big, effusive nature, always dissatisfied and eager for realities, was akin to his own nature, and they grew into a confidential intimacy. In a community of splendid barbarians, their circle was exceptional, due to the pronounced individuality of their several rebellious minds.

Despite the abolition of the sophomore societies, other groups still maintained their exclusiveness, and kept alive the old antagonism, as the approach of Tap Day intensified the struggle for election and the natural campaigning of friend for friend.

As Brockhurst had prophesied, the chairmanship of the *Lit* Board went to Wiggin, a conscientious, thorough little plodder, who had never failed to hand in to each number his numerically correct quota of essays, two stories, a hammered-out poem and two painful portfolios.

On the night of the election, Stover heard from his room in Lyceum the familiar:

"Oh, you Dink Stover — stick out your head."

"Hello there, Brocky; come up," he said anxiously. "Who got it?"

"Wiggin, of course. Come on down, I want a ramble."

It was the first time that Brockhurst had shown a longing for companionship. Stover returned into the room, announcing:

"Poor old chap. Wiggin got it. Isn't it the devil?"

"Wiggin — oh, Lord!" said Regan.

"Why, he's not fit to tie Brocky's shoe-strings," said Hungerford, who fired a volley of soul-relieving oaths.

"I'm going down to bum around a bit with him," said Stover, slipping on his coat, "cheer the old boy up."

"Well, he knew it."

"Lots of difference that makes!"

Below Brocky, muffled to the ears, brim down, was whistling in unmusical enthusiasm.

"'Tis a jolly life we lead,
Care and sorrow we defy —"

"Hello, that you, Dink?" he said, breaking off. "Come on for a tramp."

At that age, being inexperienced, the undergraduate in questions of sympathy wisely returns to the instincts of the canine. Stover, without speaking, fell into his stride, and they swung off towards West Rock.

"Wiggin is the type of man," said Brockhurst, meditatively puffing his pipe, "that is the glorification of the commonplace. He is a sort of sublime earthworm, plodding along and claiming acquaintance with the rose because he travels around the roots. He is really by

instinct a bricklayer, and the danger is that he may continue either in literature or some profession where the cry is for imagination."

"You could have beaten him out," said Stover, as a solace.

"And become an earthworm?" said Brockhurst. "The luck of it is, he made up his mind to heel the *Lit.* With his ideas he would have made leader of the glee club, president of the Phi Beta Kappa, chairman of the *News,* or what not."

"Still, give him credit," said Stover, smiling to himself, for he felt that he saw for the first time the human side of Brockhurst.

"I did; it was quite an amusing time."

"What happened?"

"Why, the little grubber came up to me and said, 'Brocky, old man, you ought to have had it.'"

"Why, that was rather decent," said Stover.

"Rubbish. All form," said Brockhurst impatiently. "Showed the calibre of his mind,—the obvious; nothing but the obvious. He thought it the thing to say, that's all."

"Well, what did you answer?" said Stover wondering.

"I said, 'Well, why didn't you vote for me then?'"

Stover burst out laughing, and Brockhurst, who had lost a coveted honor, was a little mollified by the tribute.

"Of course he stammered and looked annoyed—naturally; situation his imagination couldn't meet, so I said:

"'Come, Wiggin, no stuff and nonsense. You didn't think I ought to have it, and I know damn well, now that you've won out, you'll get a Skull and Bones to wear, pose in the middle of the photograph for the Banner, and

be thoroughly satisfied at our board meeting to sit back and listen while I do the talking.'"

Stover broke into a laugh.

"Brocky, you scandalized him."

"Not at all. He thought I was joking — the last thing that occurs to the grubber is that wit is only a polite way of calling a man an ass."

"Brocky, you're at your best, don't stop."

Brockhurst smiled. It was turning a defeat into a victory. He continued:

"After all, Wiggy is interesting. I'll be revenged. I'll put him in a book some day. He represents a type — the mathematical mind, quantity not quality. He set out for the chairmanship as a man trains for a long-distance run. Do you know the truth? He rose every morning and took a cold shower, fifty swings to the left with the dumb-bell, fifty to the right, ate nothing heavy or starchy for his meals, walked the same distance each afternoon, and worked his two hours each night, hammering out divine literature."

"Oh, I say!" said Dink, a little in doubt.

Brockhurst began to laugh.

"He may have for all I know. Now I'll bury him. He will be eminently successful — I like that word eminently. You see he has no sense of humor, and especially no imagination to hinder him." Brockhurst, in one of his quixotic moods, began to gesture to the stars as he abandoned himself to the delights of his conceit. "Oh, that's a wonderful thing, to have no imagination — the saving of commonplace minds. If Wiggin had an imagination he would never have written a line, he would have perceived the immense distances that separated him from the Olympians. Instead he read Stevenson, Dumas, Kipling, and, unafraid, wrote little Steven-

son echoes of Dumas, capsule Kiplings. He'll go out in the world, nothing will frighten him. He will rebel against nothing, for he hasn't an idea. He will choose the woman he needs for his needs, persuade himself that he's in love, and then persuade her. And he'll believe that's a virtuous marriage. He'll belong to the conservative party, the conservative church, and will be a distinguished subordinate, who will stand for tradition, institutions, and will be said to resemble some great man. Then he'll die, and will be pointed to as a great example. *Requiescat in pace.*"

"Off with his head," said Stover appreciatively. "Now he's finished, own up, Brocky, that you are furious that you did not buckle down and beat him out."

"Of course I am — damn it," said Brockhurst. "I know I did right, but no one else will ever know it. And the strange thing is, Dink, the best thing for me is to have missed out."

"Why, in Heaven's name?"

"If I had made the chairmanship, I should probably be tapped for Bones — one of the successful. I might have become satisfied. Do you know that that is the great danger of this whole senior business?"

"What?"

"The fellow who wears his honors like a halo. He's made Bones or Keys, he's a success in life. Nothing more awaits him. 'I was it.'"

"Still, you would have liked it."

"Sure; I'm inconsistent," said Brocky, with a laugh. "It's only when I don't get what I want that my beautiful reason shows me I shouldn't have had it."

"Well, there's no danger of either of us disappearing under the halos," said Stover shortly.

"I'm not so sure about you," said Brockhurst.

The casual doubt aroused strange emotions in Stover.

"I thought you didn't believe in them," he said slowly.

"I don't. I don't believe in organizations, institutions, traditions — that's my point of view," said Brockhurst. "But then I'm in the world to be in revolt."

"You once spoke of the society system — the whole thing as it exists in America —" said Stover, "as a sort of idol worship. I never quite understood your meaning."

"Why, I think it's quite obvious," said Brockhurst surprised. "What was idol worship? A large body of privileged charlatans, calling themselves priests, impressed the masses with all the flummery of mysterious ceremonies, convenient voices issuing from caves or stone idols. What was an idol? An ordinary chunk of marble, let us say, issuing from the sculptor's chisel. When did it become sacred and awe-inspiring? When it had been placed in an inner shrine of shrines, removed from the public, veiled in shadows, obscured by incense, guarded by solicitous guards; the stone is still a stone but the populace is convinced. Look into a well in daylight — commonplace; look into it at night — a great mystery; black is never empty, the imagination fills it."

"How does this apply?" said Stover, impatiently.

"Cases are parallel. A group of us come together for the purpose of debate and discussion; no one notices it beyond a casual thought. Suddenly we surround ourselves with mystery, appear on the campus with a sensational pin stuck in our cravats, a bat's head or a gallows, and when, marvellously enough, some one asks us what the dickens we are wearing, we turn away; instantly it becomes known that something so deadly secret has begun that we have sworn to shed our heart's blood be-

fore we allow the holy, sacred name of Bat's Head or Gallow's Bird to pass our lips!"

"It's a little foolish, but what's the harm?"

"The harm is that this mumbo-jumbo, fee-fi-fo-fum, high cockalorum business is taken seriously. It's the effect on the young imagination that comes here that is harmful. Dink, I tell you, and I mean it solemnly, that when a boy comes here to Yale, or any other American college, and gets the flummery in his system, believes in it — surrenders to it — so that he trembles in the shadow of a tomblike building, doesn't dare to look at a pin that stares him in the face, is afraid to pronounce the holy, sacred names; when he's got to that point he has ceased to *think*, and no amount of college life is going to revive him. That's the worst thing about it all, this mental subjection which the average man undergoes here when he comes up against all this rigmarole of Tap Day, gloomy society halls, marching home at night, et cetera — et ceteray. By George, it *is* a return of the old idol-worship idea — thinking men in this twentieth century being impressed by the same methods that kept nations in servitude to charlatans three thousand years before. It's wrong, fundamentally wrong — it's a crime against the whole moving spirit of university history — the history of a struggle for the liberation of the human mind."

"But, Brocky, what would you have them do — run as open clubs?"

"Not at all," said Brockhurst. "I would strip them of all nonsense; in fact that is their weakness, not their strength, and it is all unnecessary. This is what I'd do: drop the secrecy — this extraordinary muffled breathless guarding of an empty can — retain the privilege any club has of excluding outsiders, stop this childishness of get-

ting up and leaving the room if some old lady happens to ask are you a Bones man or a Keys man. Instead, when a Bones man goes to see a freshman whom he wants to befriend, have him say openly as he passes the chapter house:

"'That's my society — Skull and Bones. It stands as a reward of merit here. Hope you'll do something to deserve it.'

"Which is the better of the two ideas, the saner, the manlier and the more natural? What would they lose by eliminating the objectionable, unnecessary features — all of which you may be sure were started as horse play, and have curiously enough come to be taken in deadly earnestness?"

"I think you exaggerate a little," said Stover, unwilling to accept this arraignment.

"No, I don't," said Brockhurst stubbornly. "The thing is a fetish; it gets you; it's meant to get you. It gets me, and if you're honest you'll admit it gets you. Now own up."

"Yes, I suppose it does."

"Now, Dink, you're fighting for one thing up here, the freedom of your mind and your will."

"Why, yes," Stover said, surprised at Brockhurst's knowledge of his inner conflicts. "Yes, that's exactly what I'm fighting out."

"Well, my boy, you'll never get what you're after until you see this thing as it is — the unreasoning harm done, the poppycock that has been thrown around a good central idea — if you admit such things are necessary, which of course I don't."

"You see," said Stover stubbornly, "you're against all organization."

"I certainly am — inherited organizations," said

Brockhurst immediately, "organizations that are imposed on you. The only organization necessary is the natural, spontaneous coming together of congenial elements."

They had returned to the campus, and Brockhurst, by intent leading the way, stopped before the lugubrious bulk of Skull and Bones.

"There you are," he said, with a laugh. "Look at it. It's built of the same stone as other buildings, it has in it what secret? Go up, young Egyptian, to its mystery in awe and reverence, young idol worshiper of thirty centuries ago."

"Damn it, Brocky, it does get me," said Stover with a short laugh.

"Curious," said Brockhurst, turning away. "The architecture of these sacred tombs is almost invariably the suggestion of the dungeon — the prison of the human mind."

Stover's conversation with Brockhurst did not at first trouble him much. Curiously enough the one idea he retained was that Brockhurst had spoken of him as a possibility for Tap Day.

"What nonsense," he said to himself angrily. "Here, I know better!"

But the next afternoon, the thought returning to him with pleasure, all at once, following a boyish whim, he passed into his old entry at Lawrence, and, going down a little guiltily into the region of the bath-tubs, came to the wall on which was inscribed the lists of his class.

On the Bones list, third from the top, the name Stover had been replaced and heavily underlined.

It gave him quite a thrill; something seemed to leap up inside of him, and he went out hastily. Then all at

once he became angry. It was like opening up again a fight that had been fought and lost.

"What an ass I am," he said furiously. "The deuce of a chance I have to go Bones — with Reynolds and Le Baron. Can the leopard change his spots? About as much chance as a ki-yi has to go through a sausage machine and come out with a bark."

But, as he went towards Jean Story's home, thinking of her and what she would want, the force of what Brockhurst had said began to weaken.

"Brocky is impractical," he said artfully. "We must deal with things as they are, make the best of them. He exaggerates the effect on the imagination. At any rate, no one can accuse me of not taking a stand."

He saw the old colonial home, white and distinguished under the elms, and he said to himself, hoping against hope:

"If I were tapped — it would mean a good deal to her. I'll be darned if I'll let Brocky work me up. I'm not going up against anything more! I've done enough here."

He said it defiantly, for the courage of a man has two factors, his courage and the courage of the woman he loves.

CHAPTER XXV

WHEN he had returned to the college after the summer, he came to his first call on Jean Story with a confident enthusiasm, eager for the first look in her eyes. He had not corresponded with her during the summer. He had not even asked for permission to write, confident though he was that her consent would now be given. He was resolved, as a penance for his first blunder, to hold himself in reserve on every occasion. Bob had written the news, always pressing him to take two weeks off for a visit to the camp, but Dink, despite the tugging at his heart, had stuck to Regan, perhaps a little secretly pleased to show his earnestness.

Now, as he came swinging impatiently toward the glowing white columns under the elms, he realized all at once what was the moving influence in his struggle for growth and independence.

"Here is the horny-handed son of toil," he said, holding out his hand with a laugh.

She took it, turning over the firm palm with a little curiosity, and looked at him sharply, aware of a great change — they were no longer boy and girl. The vacation had made of the impetuous Dink Stover she had known a new personality that was strange and a little intimidating.

He did not understand at all the sudden dropping of her look, nor the uneasy turning away, nor the quick constraint that came. He was hurt with a sudden sharp sting that he had never known before, and the ache of

unreasoning jealousy at the bare thought of what might have happened during the summer.

"I'm awfully glad to see you," she said, but the words sounded formal.

He followed her into the parlor puzzled, irritated by something he did not understand, something that lay underneath everything she said, and seemed to interpose itself as a barrier between them and the old open feeling of camaraderie.

"Mother will be so glad to see you," she said, after a little moment of awkwardness. "I must call her."

This maneuver completed his bewilderment, which increased when, Mrs. Story joining them, suddenly the Jean Story of old returned with the same cordiality and the same enthusiasm. She asked a hundred questions, leading him on until he was launched into an account of his summer experiences, the little bits of real life that had brought home to him the seriousness of the world that waited outside.

He spoke not as the Stover of sophomore year, filled with the enthusiasm of discovery, but with a maturer mind, which had begun to reflect and to reason upon what had come into his knowledge.

Mrs. Story, sunk in the old high-backed arm-chair near the fire, followed him, too, aware also of the change in the boy, wondering what lay in the mind of her daughter, camped at her knee on the hearth rug, listening so intently and yet clinging to her as though for instinctive protection.

Stover spoke only of outward things; the thoughts that lay beneath, that would have come out so eagerly before the girl, did not appear in the presence of another. As he understood nothing of this sudden introduction of a third into the old confidential relationship, he decided

to be more formal than the girl, and rose while still his audience's attention was held by his account.

"It's been awfully jolly to see you again," he said with a perfect manner to Mrs. Stover.

"But you're going to stay to dinner," she said, with a little smile.

"Awfully sorry, but I've got a dozen things to do," he said, in the same careful, matter-of-fact tone. "Bob sent word he'd come later."

Jean Story had not urged him. He went to her with mechanical cheeriness, saying:

"Good-by. You're looking splendidly."

She did not answer, being in one of her silent moods. Mrs. Story went with him towards the door, with a few practical housekeeping questions on the ménage that had just begun. As they were in the ante-room, Jim Hunter entered and, greeting them, passed into the salon.

Stover, deaf to anything else, heard her greeting:

"Why, Jim, I *am* glad to see you."

Mrs. Story was asking him a question, but he did not hear it. He heard only the echoes of what seemed to him the joy in her laugh.

"If you need any rugs let me know," said Mrs. Story in patient repetition.

"I beg your pardon," he stammered. "Yes — yes, of course."

She looked at him with a little maternal pity, knowing the pang that had gone through him, and for a moment a word was on her lips to enlighten him. But she judged it wiser to be silent, and said:

"Come in for dinner to-morrow night, surely."

This invitation fitted at once into Stover's scheme of mislogic. He saw in it a mark of compassion, and of compassion for what reason? Plainly, Jean was inter-

ested in some one else, perhaps engaged. In ten minutes, to his own lugubrious satisfaction, he had convinced himself it was no other than Jim Hunter. But a short, inquisitive talk with Joe Hungerford, who magnanimously appeared stupidly unconscious of the real motives, reassured him on this point. So, after the hot tempest of jealousy, he began to feel a little resentment at her new, illogical attitude of defensive formality.

Gradually, as he gave no sign of unbending from his own assumption of strict politeness, she began to change, but so gradually that it was not for weeks that he perceived that the old intimate relations had returned. This little interval, however, had brought to him a new understanding. With her he had lost the old impulsiveness. He began to reason and analyze, to think of cause and effect in their relationship. As a consequence the initiative and the authority that had formerly been with her came to him. All at once he perceived, to his utter surprise, what she had felt immediately on his return: that he was the stronger, and that the old, blind, boyish adoration for the girl, who was companion to the stars, had steadied into the responsible and guiding love of a man.

This new supremacy brought with it several differences of opinion. When the question of the football captaincy had come up he did not tell her of his decision, afraid of the ambition he knew was strong in her for his career.

When he saw her the next night, Bob had already brought the news and the reason. She received him with great distance, and for the first time showed a little cruelty in her complete ignoring of his presence.

"You are angry at me," he said, when finally he had succeeded in finding her alone.

"Yes, I am," she said point blank. "Why didn't you tell me what you were planning?"

"I didn't dare," he said frankly. "You wouldn't have approved."

"Of course I wouldn't. It was ridiculous. Why shouldn't you be the captain?"

"There were reasons," he said seriously. "I should not have had a united team back of me — oh, I know it."

"Absurd," she said with some heat. "You should have gone out and made them follow you. Really, it's too absurd, renouncing everything. Here's the Junior Prom; every one says you would have led the class if you'd have stood for it."

"Yes, and it's just because a lot of fellows thought they knew my whole game of democracy that I wouldn't stand for it."

She grew quite angry. He had never seen her so stirred.

"Stuff and nonsense. What do you care for their opinion? You should be captain and chairman of the Prom, but you renounce everything — you seem to delight in it. It's too absurd; it's ridiculous. It's like Don Quixote riding around."

He was hurt at this, and his face showed it.

"It's something to be able to refuse what others are grabbing for," he said shortly. "But all you seem to care for is the name."

The flash that was in his eyes surprised her, and the sudden stern note in his voice that she had never heard before brought her to a quick realization of how she must have wounded him. Her manner changed. She became very gentle, and before he went she said hurriedly:

"Forgive me. You were right, and I was very petty."

But though he had shown his independence of her ambitions for him, and gained thereby, at heart he had a foolish longing, a senseless dream of winning out on Tap Day — just for the estimation he knew she held of that honor. And, wishing this ardently, he was influenced by it. There were questions about the senior societies that he had not put to himself honestly, as he had in the case of the sophomore. He knew they were way back in his mind, claiming to be met, but, thinking of Jean, he said to himself evasively again and again:

"Suppose there are bad features. I've done enough to show my nerve. No one can question that!"

With the passing of the winter, and the return to college in the pleasant month of April, the final, all-absorbing Tap Day loomed over them only six weeks away. It was not a particularly agreeable period. The contending ambitions were too keen, too conflicting, for the maintenance of the old spirit of comradeship. The groups again defined themselves, and the "lame ducks," in the hopes of being noticed, assiduously cultivated the society of what are called "the big men."

One afternoon in the first week in April, as Dink was returning from the gymnasium, he was suddenly called to from the street. Chris Schley and Troutman, in a two-seated rig, were hallooing:

"Hello there, Dink."

"Come for a ride."

"Jump in — join us."

The two had never been of his intimates, belonging to a New York crowd, who were spoken of for Keys. He hesitated, but as he was free he considered:

"What's the game?"

"We're out for a spin towards the shore. Tommy Bain and Stone were going but had to drop out. Come along. We might get a shore supper, and toddle back by moonlight."

"I've got to be here by seven," said Dink doubtfully.

"Oh, well, come on; we'll make it just a drive."

"Fine."

He sprang into the front seat, and they started off in the young, tingling air. Troutman, at the reins, was decidedly unfamiliar with their uses, and, at a fervent plea from Schley, Stover assumed control. Since freshman year the three had been seldom thrown together. He remembered Troutman then as a rather overgrown puppy type, and Schley as a nuisance and a hanger-on. He scanned them now, pleasantly surprised at their transformation. They had come into a clean-cut type, affable, alert, and if there was small mark of character, there was an abundance of good-humor, liveliness, and sociability.

"Well, Dink, old chap," said Troutman, as he passed along quieter ways, "the fatal day approaches."

"It does."

"A lot of seniors are out buying nice brand-new derbies to wear for our benefit."

"I'll bet they're scrapping like cats and dogs," said Schley.

"They say last year the Bones list wasn't agreed upon until five minutes before five."

"The Bones crowd always fight," said Schley, from the point of view of the opposite camp. "I say, Dink, did you ever think of heeling Keys?"

"No, I'm not a good enough jollier up for that crowd."

"They say this year Keys is going to shut down on the sporting life and swipe some of the Bones type."

"Really?" said Stover, in disbelief.

"Sure thing; Tommy Bain has switched."

"I heard he was packer," said Stover, not particularly depressed. In the college the rumor had always been that the Keys crowd had what was termed a packer in the junior class, who helped them to pledge some of their selections before Tap Day.

"Sure he is," said Troutman, with conviction.

"Wish he'd stuck to Bones," said Schley. "Yours truly would feel more hopeful."

"Why, you fellows are sure," said Stover to be polite.

"The deuce we are!"

Schley, tiring of the conversation, was amusing himself from the back seat by well-simulated starts of surprise and a sudden snatching off of his hat to different passers-by, exclaiming:

"Why, how *do* you do. I remember meeting you before."

He did it well, communicated his good spirits to the pedestrians, who took his banter good-naturedly.

All at once his mischievous eye perceived two girls of a rather noticeable type. Instantly he was on his feet, with an exaggerated sweep of his hat, exclaiming:

"Ladies, accept my carriage, my prancing horses, my groom and my footman."

The girls, bursting into laughter, waved to him.

"Yes, it's a lovely day," continued Schley, in imitation of McNab. "Mother's gone to the country, aunty's visiting us now, Uncle John's coming to-morrow — he'll be sober then. Too bad, girls, you're going the other way, and such lovely weather. Won't you take a ride?

What? Oh, do now. Here, I say, Dink — whoa there! They're coming."

"Rats," said Troutman, glancing uneasily up the street.

"Sure they are. Whoa! Hold up. We'll give 'em a little ride, just for a lark. What's the diff?"

He was down, hat off, with exaggerated Chesterfield politeness, going to their coming.

"Do you mind?" said Troutman to Stover. "Schley's a crazy ass to do this just now."

"I wouldn't take them far," said Stover, who did not particularly care. He had no facility for bantering of this sort, but it rather amused him to listen to Schley. He saw that while they were of an obvious type one was insipid, and the other rather pretty, dark with Irish black eyes.

"Ladies, I wish to make you acquainted with my friends," said Schley, as he might speak to a duchess. "The ill-favored gent with the vermilion hair is the Reverend Doctor Balmfinder; the one with the padded shoulders is Binks, my trainer. Now what is this little girl's name?"

"Muriel," said the blonde, "Muriel Stacey."

"Of course, I might have known it. And yours of course is Maude, isn't it?"

"My name is Fanny Le Roy," said the brunette with a little pride.

"Dear me, what a beautiful name," said Schley. "Now girls, we'll take you for a little ride, but we can't take you very far for our mammas don't know we're out, and you must promise to be very good and get out when we tell you, and not ask for candy! Do we promise?"

Schley sat on the rear seat, chatting along, a girl on either side of him, while Troutman, facing about, added

his badinage. It was not excruciatingly witty, and yet at times Stover, occupied with the driving, could not help bursting into a laugh at the sheer nonsense. It interested him as a spectator; it was a side of life he knew little of, for, his nature being sentimental, he was a little afraid of such women.

"What's our real names?" said Troutman in reply to a demand. "Do you really want to know? We'll send them to you. Of course we've met before. In New York, wasn't it, at the junior cotillion?"

"Sure I saw this fellow at the Hari-gori's ball," said Fanny, appealing to her companion.

"Sure you did."

"If you say so, all right," said Troutman, winking at Schley. "Fanny, you have beautiful eyes. Course you don't know it."

"You two are great jolliers, aren't you?" said Fanny, receiving the slap-stick compliment with pleasure.

"They think we're easy," said Muriel, with a look at Schley.

"I think the fellow that's driving is the best of the lot," said Fanny, with the usual method of attack.

"Wow," said Troutman.

"Come on back," said Schley, "we don't count."

Stover laughed and drove on. The party had now passed the point of interest. He had no desire for a chance meeting that would require explanations, but he volunteered no advice, not caring to appear prudish in the company of such men of the world.

They were in the open country, the outskirts of New Haven just left behind. For some time Fanny Le Roy had been silent, pressing her hand against her side, frowning. All at once a cry was wrung from her. The carriage stopped. All turned in alarm to where the

girl, her teeth compressed, clutching at her side, was lying back against the seat, writhing in agony.

Troutman swore under his breath.

"A devil of a mess!"

They descended hurriedly and laid the girl on the grass, where her agony continued increasingly. Schley and Troutman were whispering apart. The other girl, hysterically bending over her companion, mopped her face with a useless handkerchief, crying:

"She's got a fit; she's got a fit!"

"I say it's appendicitis or gripes," said Troutman, coming over to Stover. His face was colorless, and he spoke the words nervously. "The deuce of a fix Chris has got us into!"

"Come, we've got to get her back," said Stover, realizing the gravity of the situation. He went abruptly to the girl and spoke with quick authority. "Now stop crying; I want you to get hold of yourself. Here Schley, lend a hand; you and Troutman get her back into the carriage. Do it quickly."

"What are you going to do?" said Troutman, under his breath.

"Drive her to a doctor, of course."

"Couldn't we go and fetch a doctor here?"

"No, we couldn't!"

With some difficulty they got the suffering girl into the carriage and started back. No one spoke; the banter had given place to a few muttered words that broke the moaning, delirious tones of the stricken girl.

"Going to drive into New Haven this way?" said Troutman, for the second time under his breath.

"Sure."

"Hell!"

They came to the city streets, and Stover drove on

hastily, seeking from right to left for a doctor. All at once he drew up at the curb, flung the reins to Troutman, and rushed into a house where he had seen a sign displayed —" Dr. Burke." He was back almost immediately with the doctor at his heels.

" I say, Dink, look here," said Schley, plucking him aside, as the doctor hurriedly examined the girl. " This is a deuce of a mess."

" You bet it is," said Stover, thinking of the sufferer.

" I say, if this gets out it'll be a nasty business."

" What do you mean? "

" If we're seen driving back with — well, with this bunch! "

" What do you propose? " said Stover sharply.

Troutman joined them.

" See here, leave her with the doctor, I'll put up all the money that's necessary, the doctor'll keep a close mouth! Man alive, you can't go back this way! "

" Why not? "

" Good Lord, it'll queer us,— we'll never get over it."

" Think of the papers," said Schley, plucking at his glove.

" We can fix it up with the doctor."

At this moment Dr. Burke joined them, quiet, businesslike, anxious.

" She has all the symptoms of a bad attack of appendicitis. There's only one thing to do; get her to the hospital at once. I'll get my hat and join you."

" Drive to — drive to the hospital? " said Troutman, with a gasp, " right through the whole city, right in the face of every one? "

" Don't be a fool, Dink," said Schley nervously. " We'll fix up Burke; we'll give him a hundred to take her and shut up."

Stover, too, saw the danger and the inevitable scandal. He saw, also, that they were no longer men as he had thought. The thin veneer had disappeared — they were boys, terrified, aghast at a crisis beyond their strength.

"You're right, it would queer *you*," he said abruptly. "Clear out — both of you."

"And you?"

"You're going to stay?" said Schley. Neither could face his eyes.

"Clear out, I tell you!"

When Burke came running down the steps he looked at Stover in surprise.

"Hello, where are your friends?"

"They had other engagements," said Dink grimly. "All ready."

"I've seen your face before," said Dr. Burke, climbing in.

"I'm Stover."

"Dink Stover of the eleven?"

"Yes, Dink Stover of the eleven," said Stover, his face hardening. "Where do I drive?"

"Do you want to go quietly?" said Dr. Burke, with a look of sympathetic understanding.

From behind the girl, writhing, began to moan:

"Oh, Doctor — Doctor — I can't stand it — I can't stand it."

"What's the quickest way?" said Stover.

"Chapel Street," said the doctor.

Stover turned the horses' heads into the thoroughfare, looking straight ahead, aware soon of the men who saw him in the full light of the day, driving through the streets of New Haven in such inexplicable company. And suddenly at the first turn he came face to face with another carriage in which were Jean Story and her mother.

CHAPTER XXVI

WHEN Stover returned to his rooms, it was long after supper.

"Where the deuce have you been?" said Hungerford, looking up from his books.

"Went for a drive, got home late," said Stover shortly. He filled the companionable pipe, and sank into the low arm-chair, which Regan had broken for comfort. Something in his abrupt procedure caused Bob Story to look over at Regan with an inquiring raise of his eyebrows.

"Got this psychology yet?" said Hungerford, to try him out.

"No," said Stover.

"Going to get it?"

"No."

"The thinghood of a thing is its indefinable somewhatness," said Hungerford, with another slashing attack on the common enemy, to divert Stover's attention. "What in the name of peanuts does that stuff mean?"

Dink, refusing to be drawn into conversation, sat enveloped in smoke clouds, his eyes on the clock.

"Hello, I forgot," said Story presently. "I say, Dink, Troutman and Schley were around here hallooing for you."

"They were, eh?"

"About an hour ago. Wanted to see you particularly. Said they'd be around again."

"I see."

At this moment from below came a bellow:

"Oh, Dink Stover — hello above there!"

"That's Troutman now," said Joe Hungerford.

Stover went to the window, flinging it up.

"Well, who's there?"

"Troutman and Chris Schley. I say, Dink, we've got to see you. Come on down."

"Thanks, I haven't the slightest desire to see you now or at any other time," said Stover, who closed the window and resumed his seat, eyeing the clock.

His three friends exchanged troubled glances, and Regan began to whistle to himself, but no questions were asked. At nine o'clock Stover rose and took his hat.

"I'm going out. I may be back late," he said, and went down the stairs.

"What the devil?" said Hungerford, closing his book.

"He's in some scrape," said Regan ruthfully.

"Oh, Lord, and just at this time, too," said Story.

Stover went rapidly towards the hospital. The girl had been operated on immediately, and the situation was of the utmost seriousness. He had been told to come back at nine. When he arrived he found Muriel Stacey already in the waiting-room, her eyes heavy with frightened weeping. He looked at her curiously. All suggestion of the provoking impertinence and the surface allurement was gone. Under his eyes was nothing but an ignorant boor, stupid and hysterical before the awful fact of death.

"What's the news?" he asked.

"Oh, Mr. Stover, I don't know. I can't get anything out of them," the woman said wildly. "Oh, do you think she's going to die?"

"Of course not," he said gruffly. "See here, where's her family?"

"I don't know."

"Don't they live here?"

"They're in Ohio somewhere, I think. I don't know. Ask the doctor, won't you, Mr. Stover? He'll tell you something."

He left her, and, making inquiries, was met by a young intern, immaculate and alert, who was quite communicative to Dink Stover of the Yale eleven.

"She's had a bad case of it; appendix had already burst. You got her here just in time."

"What's the outlook?"

"Can't tell. She came out of the anæsthetic all right." He went into a technical discussion of the dangers of blood poisoning, concluding: "Still, I should say her chances were good. It depends a good deal on the resistance. However, I think your friend's family ought to be notified."

Stover did not notice the "your friend," nor the look which the doctor gave him.

"She's here alone as far as I can find out," he said. "Poor little devil. I'll call round about midnight."

"No need," said the doctor briskly, "nothing'll develop before to-morrow."

Stover sent the waiting girl home somewhat tranquilized, and, finding a florist's shop open, left an order to be sent in to the patient the first thing in the morning. Then, thoroughly exhausted by his sudden contact with all the nervous fates of the hospital, he walked home and heavily to bed.

The next morning as he went to his eating-joint with Regan and Hungerford, the newsboy, who had his papers ready, gave them to him with a hesitating look. All at once Joe Hungerford swore mightily.

"Now what's wrong, Joe?" said Regan in surprise.

"Nothing," said Hungerford hastily, but almost im-

mediately he stopped, and said in a jerky, worried way: "Say, here's the devil to pay, Dink. I suppose you ought to know about it. Damn the papers."

With his finger he indicated a space on the front page of the New York newspaper he was reading. Stover took it, reading it seriously. It was only a paragraph, but it rose from the page as though it were stamped in scarlet.

DINK STOVER'S LARK
ENDS SERIOUSLY.

Below followed in suggestive detail an account of the drive with friends "not exactly in recognized New Haven society," and the sudden seizure of Miss Fanny Le Roy, with an account of his drive back to the hospital.

"That's pretty bad," he said, frowning. "What do the others say?"

One paper had it that his presence of mind and prompt action had saved the girl's life. The third one hinted that the party had been rather gay, and said in a short sentence:

"It is said other students were with young Stover, who prefer not to incur any unnecessary notoriety."

"It looks ugly," said Stover grimly.

"Who was with you?" said Hungerford anxiously.

"I prefer not to tell."

"Troutman and Schley, of course," said Regan suddenly, and, starting out of his usual imperturbability, he began to revile them.

"But, Dink, old man," said Hungerford, drawing his arm through his, "how the deuce did you ever get into it?"

"Well, Joe, what's the use of explanations?" said

Stover gloomily. "Every one'll believe what they want to. It's a thoroughly nasty mess. It's my luck, that's all."

"Is that all you can say?" said Hungerford anxiously.

"All just now. I don't feel particularly affable, Joe."

The walk from his eating-joint to the chapel was perhaps the most difficult thing he had ever done. Every one was reading the news, commenting on it, as he passed along, red, proud, and angry. He felt the fire of amazed glances, the lower classmen looking up at the big man of the junior class in disgrace, his own friends puzzled and uncomprehending.

At the fences there was an excited buzz, which dropped perceptibly as he passed. Regan was at one side, Hungerford loyally on the other. At the junior fence Bob Story, who had just got the report, came out hurriedly to him.

"I say, Dink, it — it isn't true?" he said. "Something's wrong — must be!"

"Not very far wrong," said Stover. He saw the incredulity in Bob's face, and it hurt him more than all the rest.

"Even Bob thinks I'm that sort, that I've been doing things on the sly I wouldn't stand for in public. And if he thinks it, what'll others think?"

"Shut up, Bob," he heard Regan say. "It may look a nasty mess, and Dink may not tell the real story, but one thing I know, he didn't scuttle off like a scut, but faced the music, and that's all I want to know."

Stover laughed, a short, nervous, utterly illogical laugh, defiant and stubborn. He would never tell what had happened — let those who wanted to misjudge him.

Several men in his class — he remembered them ever after — came up and patted him on the back, one or two

avoided him. Then he had to go by the senior fence into chapel with every eye upon him, watching how he bore the scandal. He knew he was red and uncomfortable, that on his face was something like a sneer. He knew that what every one was saying under his voice was that it was hard luck, damned hard luck, that it was a rotten scandal, and that Stover's chances for Skull and Bones were knocked higher than a kite.

Then something happened that almost upset him. In the press about the chapel doors he suddenly saw Le Baron's tall figure across the scrambling mass. Their glances met and with a little solemnity Le Baron raised his hat. He understood; they might be enemies to the end of their days, but the hat had been raised as the tribute of a man to a man. Once in his seat he looked about with a little scorn — Troutman and Schley were not there.

After first recitation he went directly to the hospital, stubbornly resolved to give no explanations, stubbornly resolved in his own knowledge of his right to affront public opinion in any way he chose. The news he received was reassuring, the girl was out of danger. Muriel Stacey not yet arrived, for which he was physically thankful.

He returned to his rooms, traversing the difficult campus with erect head.

"Now, boy, see here," said Hungerford, when he had climbed the stairs, "I want this out with you. What did happen, and who ran away?"

"You've got the story in the papers, haven't you?" said Stover wearily. "The New Haven ones have in a couple of columns and my photograph."

"Is that all, Dink, you're going to tell me?"

"Yes."

"Is that all you're going to let Jean Story know?" said Hungerford boldly.

Stover winced.

"Damn you, Joe!"

"Is it?"

"She'll have to believe what she wants to about me," said Stover slowly. "It's a test."

"No, it isn't a test or a fair test," said Hungerford hotly. "I know everything's all right, boy, but I want to stop anything that might he said. You're hurt now because you know you're misjudged."

"Yes, I am hurt."

"Sure; a rotten bit of luck has put you in a false position. That's the whole matter."

"Joe, I won't tell you," said Stover shortly. "I am mad clear through and through. I'm going to shut up on the whole business. If my friends misjudge me — so much the worse for them. If some one else —" He stopped, flung his hat on the couch, and sat down at the desk. "What's the lesson?"

But at this moment Regan and Story came in, bolting the door.

"Well, we've got the truth," said Story. He came over and laid his hand on Dink's shoulder.

"What do you mean?"

"Tom and I have had it out with Schley and Troutman. They've told the whole thing, the miserable little curs." His voice shook. "You're all right, Dink; you always were, but it's a shame — a damn shame!"

"Oh, well, they lost their nerve," said Stover heavily.

"Why the devil didn't you tell us last night?"

"What was the use?"

"We could have stopped its getting into the papers, or had it right."

"Well — it all comes down to a question of luck sometimes," said Stover. "I was just as responsible as they were — it was only fooling, but there's the chance."

"Dink, I've done one thing you may not like."

"What's that?"

"I've written the whole story to your folks at home — sent it off."

"No — I don't mind — I — that was rather white of you, Bob — thank you," said Stover. He drew a long breath, went to the window and controlled himself. "What are Troutman and Schley going to do?"

"They're all broken up," said Story.

"Don't wonder."

"They won't face it out very long," said Regan, without pity.

"Well, it was a pretty hard test," said Stover, coming back — and by that alone they knew what it had meant to him.

Despite the giving out of the true story, the atmosphere of scandal still clung to the adventure. His friends rallied stanchly to him, but from many quarters Stover felt the attitude of criticism, and that the thing had been too public not to affect the judgment of the senior societies, already none too well disposed toward him.

Stover was sensitively proud, and the thought of how the story had traveled with all its implications wounded him keenly. He had done nothing wrong, nothing for which he had to blush. He had simply acted as a human being, as any decent gentleman would have acted, and yet by a malignant turn of fate he was blackguarded to the outer world, and had given his enemies in college a chance to imply that he had two attitudes — in public and in secret.

The next morning came a note to him from Jean Story, the first he had ever had from her — just a few lines.

"*My Dear Friend:*

"You are coming in soon to see me, aren't you? I shall be very much *honored.*

"Most cordially,

"JEAN STORY."

The note brought a great lump to his throat. He understood what she wished him to understand, her loyalty and her pride in his courage. He read it over and over, and placed it in his pocket-book to carry always — but he did not go at once to see her. He did not want sympathy; he shunned the very thought. Before, in his revolt, he had come against a college tradition, now he was face to face with a social prejudice, and it brought an indignant bitterness.

He called every day at the hospital; out of sheer bravado at first, furious at the public opinion that would have him go his way and ignore a human being alone and suffering, even when his motives were pure.

At the end of a week he was told that the girl wanted to see him. He found her in a cot among a row of other cots. She was not white and drawn as he had expected, but with a certain flush of color in her face, and lazy eyes that eagerly waited his coming. When he had approached, surprised and a little troubled at her prettiness, she looked at him steadily a long moment until he felt almost embarrassed. Then suddenly she took his hand and carried it to her lips, and her eyes overflowed with tears, as an invalid's do with the strength of any emotion.

The nurse motioned him away, and he went, troubled

at what his boyish eyes had seen, and the touch of her lips on his hand.

"By George, she can't be very bad," he thought. "Poor little girl; she's probably never had half a chance. What the devil will become of her?"

He knew nothing of her life — he did not want to know.

When she left the hospital at last he continued to see her, always saying to himself that there was no harm in it, concealing from himself the pleasure it gave him to know himself adored.

She would never tell him where she lived, always giving him a rendezvous on a certain corner, from which they would take a walk for an hour or so. Guessing his desires, she began to change her method of dress, leaving aside the artifices, taking to simple and sober dress, which brought a curious, girlish, counterfeit charm.

"I am doing her good," he said to himself. "It means something to her to meet some one who treats her with respect — like a human being — poor little girl."

He did not realize how often he met her, leaving his troubled room-mates with a curt excuse, nor how rapidly he consumed the distance to their meeting place. He had talked to her at first seriously of serious things, then gradually, laughing in a boyish way, half tempted, he began to pay her compliments. At first she laughed with a little pleasure, but, as the new attitude continued, he felt her eyes on his face constantly in anxious, wistful scrutiny.

One night she did not keep her appointment. He waited troubled, then furious. He left after an hour's lingering, irritable and aroused.

The next night as he approached impatiently, half afraid, she was already at the lamp-post.

"I waited an hour," he said directly.

"I'm sorry; I couldn't come," she answered troubled, but without volunteering an explanation.

"Why?" he said with a new irritation.

"I couldn't," she said, shaking her head.

He felt all at once a new impulse in him — to wound her in some way and make her suffer a little for the disappointment he had had to undergo the night before.

"You did it on purpose," he said abruptly.

"No, no," she said frowning.

"You did." Then suddenly he added: "That's why you stayed away — to make me jealous."

"Never."

"Why, then?"

"I can't tell you," she said.

They walked along in silence. Her resistance in withholding the information suddenly made her desirable. He wondered what he might do with her. As they walked still in silence, he put out his hand, and his fingers closed over hers. She did not draw them away. He gave a deep breath and said:

"I would like —"

"What?" she said, looking up as his pressure made her face him.

He put out his arms and took her in them, and stood a long moment, looking at her lips.

"Forgive me — I —" he said, stepping back suddenly. "I — I didn't mean to offend you."

"No — you couldn't do that — never," she said quietly.

"You — you're so pretty to-night — I couldn't help it," he said. To himself he vowed he would never let himself be tempted again — not that night.

"I'm going to take you to your home," he said, when after small conversation they returned.

"Sure."

He was surprised and delighted at this, but almost immediately to be generous he said:

"No, no, I won't."

"I don't care."

They had reached their corner.

"To-morrow."

"Yes."

"At eight."

"Yes."

He resisted a great temptation, and offered his hand. She took it suddenly in both of hers and brought it to her lips as she had done in the hospital.

"You've been white, awful white to me," she said, and flitted away into the engulfing night.

When he left her, her words came back to him, and brought an unrest. He had almost yielded to what he had vowed never to do, he, who only wanted her to feel his respect. Yet the next day seemed endless. He regretted that he had not gone to where she lived, for then he could have found her in the afternoon.

A shower passed during the day, leaving the streets moist and luminous with long lances of light and star points on the wet stones. He went breathlessly as he had never gone before, a little troubled, always reasoning with his conscience.

"It was only a crazy spell," he said to himself. "I don't know what got into me. I'll be careful, now."

When he reached the lamp-post another figure was there, Muriel Stacey, painted and over-dressed, and *in* her hand was a white letter, that he saw half-way up the block. He stopped short, frowning.

"Where's Fanny?"

"Here's a note she sent you," said the girl; "she's gone."

"Gone?"

"This morning."

He looked at the envelope; his name was written there in a childish, struggling hand.

"All right; thank you," he said suffocating. He left hurriedly, physically uncomfortable in the presence of Muriel Stacey, her friend. At the first lamp-post he stopped, broke the envelope, and read the awkward, painfully written script.

"I'm going away, it's best for you and me I know it. Guess I would care too much and I'm not good enough for you. Don't you be angry with me. Good luck. God bless you.

"F."

He slipped it hurriedly in his pocket, and set off at a wild pace. And suddenly his conscience, his accusing conscience, rose up. He saw where he had been going. It brought him a solemn moment. Then he remembered the girl. He took the letter from his pocket and held it clutched like a hand in his hand.

"Good God," he said, "I wonder what'll become of her?"

He had found so much good that the tragedy revolted him. So he went through the busy streets with their flare and ceaseless motion, in the wet of the night, watching with solemn, melancholy eyes, other women pass with sidelong glances. All the horror and the hopelessness of a life he could not better thronged over him, and he stood a long while looking down the great bleak ways, through the gates that it is better not to pry ajar.

Then in a revulsion of feeling, terrified at what he divined, he left and went, almost in an instinct for protection, hurriedly to the Story home, white and peaceful under the elms. He did not go in, but he stood a little while opposite, looking in through the warm windows at the serenity and the security that seemed to permeate the place.

When he returned to his rooms, Joe and Regan were there. He sat down directly and told them the whole story, showing them her letter.

"She went away — for my sake," he said. "I know it. Poor little devil. It's a letter I'll always keep." Solemnly, looking at the letter, he resolved to put this with the one, the first from Jean Story, and reverently he felt that the two had the right to be joined.

"What's terrible about it," he said, talking out his soul, "is that there's so much good in them. And yet what can you do? They're human, they respond, you can't help pitying them — wanting to be decent, to help — and you can't. It's terrible to think that there are certain doors in life you open and close, that you must turn your back on human lives sometimes, that things can't be changed. Lord, but it's a terrible thing to realize."

He stopped, and he heard Regan's voice, moved as he had never heard it, say:

"That's my story — only *I* married."

Suddenly, as though realizing for the first time what he had said, he burst out: "Good God, I never meant to tell. See here, you men, that's sacred — you understand."

And Dink and Joe, looking on his face, realized all at once why a certain gentler side of life was shut out to him, and why he had never gone to the Storys'.

CHAPTER XXVII

ONE result of Stover's sobering experience with Fanny Le Roy was that he met the problem of the senior elections with directness and honesty. What Brockhurst had said of the injurious effect of secrecy and ceremony on the imagination had always been with him. Yet in his desire to stand high in the eyes of Jean Story, to win the honors she prized, he had quibbled over the question. Now the glimpse he had had into the inscrutable verities of human tragedy had all at once lifted him above the importance of local standards, and left him with but one desire — to be true to himself.

The tests that had come to him in his college life had brought with them a maturity of view beyond that of his fellows. Now that he seriously debated the question, he said to himself that he saw great evils in the system: that on the average intelligence this thraldom to formula and awe at the assumption of mystery had undeniably a narrowing effect, unworthy of a great university dedicated to liberty of thought and action. He saw that while certain individuals, such as Hungerford and Regan, laughed at the bugbear of secrecy, and went their way unconcerned, a great number, more impressionable, had been ruled from the beginning by fear alone.

With the aims and purposes of Skull and Bones he was in thorough sympathy — their independence of judgment, their seeking out of men who had to contend with poverty, their desire to reward ambition and industry and character — but the more he freely acknowl-

edged their influence for democracy and simplicity at Yale, the more he revolted at the unnecessary fetish of it all.

"They should command respect and not fear. By George, that's where I stand. All this rigmarole is ridiculous, and it's ridiculous that it ever affected me; it is of the middle ages — outgrown."

Then a problem placed itself before him. Admitting that he had even the ghost of a chance of being tapped, ought he to go into a senior society feeling as he did about so many of its observances, secretly resolved on their elimination? Finally, a week before Tap Day, he decided to go to Judge Story and frankly state his case, letting him know that he preferred thus to give notice of his beliefs.

When he arrived at the Story home the Judge was upstairs in his study. Jean, alone in the parlor, looked up in surprise at his expressed intention to see her father. Since her letter they had never been alone. Stover had avoided it with his shrinking from sympathy, and, perhaps guessing his temperament, she had made no attempt to go beyond the safe boundaries of formal intercourse.

"Yes, indeed, Dad's upstairs," she said. Then she added a little anxiously: "You look serious — is it a very serious matter?"

He hesitated, knowing instinctively that she would oppose him.

"It's something that's been on my mind for a long time," he said evasively; and he added with a smile, "It's what you call my Quixotic fit."

"It's about Skull and Bones," she said instantly.

"Yes, it is."

"What are you going to say?"

"I'm going to tell him just where I stand — just what I've come to believe about the whole business."

"And what's that?"

"That Skull and Bones, which does a great good here — I believe it — also does a great deal of harm; all of which is unnecessary and a weakness in its system. In a word, I've come to the point where I believe secrecy is un-American, undemocratic and stultifying; and, as I say, totally unnecessary. I should always be against it."

"But aren't you exaggerating the importance of it all?" she said hastily.

"No, I'm not," he said. "I used to silence myself with that, but I see the thing working out too plainly."

"But why speak about it?"

"Because I don't think it's honest not to. Of course," he added immediately, "I have about one chance in a thousand — perhaps that's why I'm so all-fired direct about it."

"I wish you wouldn't," she said, rising and coming towards him. "It might offend them terribly; you never know."

He shook his head, though her eagerness gave him a sudden happiness.

"No, I've thought it out a long while, and I've decided. It all goes back to that sophomore society scrap. I made up my mind then I wasn't going to compromise, and I'm not now."

"But I want to see you go Bones," she said illogically, in a rush. "After all you've gone through, you must go Bones!"

He did not answer this.

"Oh, it's so unnecessary," she said. "No one but you would think of it!"

"Don't be angry with me," he said, a little troubled.

"I am — it's absurd!" she said, turning away with a flash of temper.

"I'm sorry," he said, and went up the stairs.

When he returned, after an interview which, needless to say, had somewhat surprised the Judge, he found a very different Jean Story. She was waiting for him quiet and subdued, without a trace of her late irritation.

"Did you tell him?" she said gently.

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

"I didn't ask for an answer. I told him how I felt, and that I would rather my opinions should be known. That's all."

"Are you going?" she said, as he made a movement.

"I didn't know —" he said, hesitating and looking at her.

"I am not angry," she said a little wistfully. "You were quite right. I'm glad you did it. You are much bigger than I could be — I like that."

"You were the first to wake me up," he said happily, sitting down.

"Yes, but you have gone so far ahead. You do things without compromise, and that sometimes frightens me." She stopped a moment, and said, looking at him steadily: "You have kept away a long while. Now you see you are caught. You can't avoid being alone with me."

"I don't want to," he said abruptly.

"You are so proud, Dink," she said softly, using his nickname for the first time. "I have never seen any one so proud. Everything you do I think comes from that. But it must make you suffer terribly."

"Yes, it does."

They were in the front parlor, dimly lit, sitting on the

window-seat, hearing from time to time the passing chug of horses' feet.

"I knew how it must have hurt you — all this publicity," she said slowly. "Why didn't you come when I wrote you? Were you too proud?"

"Yes, I suppose so — and then it didn't seem fair to you — after all the talk."

"I was proud of you," she said, raising her head a little. She put out her hand again to his, leaving it in his for a long time, while they sat in silence. The touch that once had so disturbed him brought now only a gentle serenity. He thought of the other woman, and what might have been, with almost a hatred, the hatred of man towards whatever he wrongs.

"You are right about me," he said slowly. "Most people think I don't care what happens, that I'm sort of a thick-skinned rhinoceros. How did you know?"

"I knew."

She withdrew her hand slowly, without resistance on his part; only when he held it no longer he felt alone, abandoned to the blackness of the street outside.

"I've kept my promise to you, Jean," he said a little unsteadily, "but don't make it too hard."

She rose and he followed. Together they stood in the shadows of the embrasure, half seeing each other. Only he knew that her large eyes were looking out at him with the look of the woman that he had first called forth when he had wounded the pride of the girl.

"I am glad you didn't listen to me just now," she said slowly.

"When?"

"When you went upstairs to Dad. You will never weaken, I know." She came a little towards him, and understanding, he took her gently, wonderingly, in his

arms. "It's going to be very hard for you," she said, "Tap Day — to stand there and know that you may be misjudged. I should be very proud to announce our engagement, then — that same day."

Then he knew that he held in his arms one who had never given so much as her hand lightly, who came to him in unflinching loyalty, whose only interest would be his interest, who would know no other life but his life, whose joy would be the struggle that was his struggle.

Tap Day arrived at last, cloudy and misty. He had slept badly in fits and starts, nor had the others fared better, with the exception of Regan, who had rumbled peacefully through the night — but then Regan was one whom others sought. The morning was interminable, a horror. They did not even joke about the approaching ordeal. No one was so sure of election but that the possible rejection of some chum cast its gloom over the day.

Dink ran over a moment after lunch with Bob for a last word with Jean. She was going with her father and mother to see the tapping from a window in Durfee.

"I shall only see you," she said to him, with her hands in his, and her loyal eyes shining. "I shall be so proud of the way you take it."

"So you think I won't be tapped," he said slowly.

"It means so little now," she said. "That can't add a feather's weight to what you are."

They went back to their rooms, joining Hungerford and Regan, who were whiling away the time playing piquet.

"Here," said Tom in relief when they entered, "one of you fellows keep Joe entertained, the darn fool has suddenly made up his mind he's going to be passed over."

Regan, relinquishing his place, went back to his book.

"Why, Joe, you fluffy ass," said Story affectionately, "you're the surest of the lot. Shut up — cheer us up instead."

"Look at that mound of jelly," said Hungerford peevishly, pointing to Regan. "Has he any nerves?"

"What's the use of fidgeting?" said Regan.

An hour later Hungerford stretched his arm nervously, rose and consulted the clock.

"Four-fifteen; let's hike over in about twenty minutes."

"All right."

"Say, I don't mind saying that I feel as though I were going to be taken out, stuck full of holes, sawed up, drawn and quartered and boiled alive. I feel like jumping on an express and running away."

Stover, remembering Joe's keen suffering at the spectacle back in freshman year, said gravely:

"You're sure, Joe. You'll go among the first. Come back with smelling salts for me. I've got to stand through the whole thing and grin like a Cheshire cat — that's *de rigueur*. Do you remember how bully Dudley was when he missed out? Funny — then I thought I had a cinch."

"If it was left to our class, you would, Dink," said Bob.

"Thanks."

Stover smiled a little at this unconscious avowal of his own estimate, rose, picked out his favorite pipe, and said:

"I don't care so much — there's a reason. Well, let's get into the mess."

The four went together, over toward the junior fence, already swarming.

"Ten minutes of five," said Hungerford, looking at the clock that each had seen.

"Yes."

Some one stopped Stover to wish him good luck. He looked down on a diminutive figure in large spectacles, trying to recall, who was saying to him:

"I — I wanted to wish you the best."

"Oh, it's Wookey," said Stover suddenly. He shook hands, rather troubled. "Well, boy, there's not much chance for me."

"Oh, I hope so."

"Thanks just the same."

"Hello, Dink, old fellow."

"Put her there."

"You know what we all want?"

He was in another group, patted on the back, his arm squeezed, listening to the welcome loyalty of those who knew him.

"Lord, if they'd only have sense enough."

He smiled and made his way towards his three friends, exchanging salutations.

"Luck, Dink."

"Same to you, Tommy Bain."

"Here's wishing."

"Back to you, Dopey."

"You've got my vote."

"Thanks."

He joined his room-mates under the tree, looking over the heads to the windows of Durfee where he saw Jean Story with her father and mother. Presently, seeking everywhere, she saw him. Their eyes met, he lifted his cap, she nodded slightly. From that moment he knew she would see no one else.

"Let's keep together," said Regan. "Lock arms."

The four stood close together, arms gripped, resisting the press that crushed them together, speaking no more, hearing about them the curious babble of the underclassmen.

"That's Regan."

"Story'll go first."

"Stand here."

"This is the spot."

"Lord, they look solemn enough."

"Almost time."

"Get your watch out."

"Fifteen seconds more."

"Five, four, three, two—"

"*Boom!*"

Above their heads the chapel bell broke over them with its five decisive strokes, swallowed up in the roar of the college.

"*Yea!*"

"Here he comes!"

"First man for Bones!"

"Reynolds!"

From where he stood Stover could see nothing. Only the travelling roar of the crowd told of the coming seniors. Then there was a stir in the crowd near him, and Reynolds, in black derby, came directly for them; pushed them aside, and suddenly slapped some one behind.

A roar went up again.

"Who was it?" said Story quickly.

"Hunter, Jim Hunter."

The next moment Hunter, white as a sheet, bumped at his side and passed, followed by Reynolds; down the convulsive lane the crowd opened to him.

Roar followed roar, and reports came thick.

"Stone's gone Keys."

"Three Wolf's-Head men in the crowd."

"McNab gets Keys."

"Hooray!"

"Dopey's tapped!"

"Bully."

"Wiggins fourth man for Bones."

Still no one came their way. Then all at once a Bones man, wandering in the crowd, came up behind Bob Story, caught him by the shoulders, swung him around to make sure, and gave him the slap.

Regan's, Hungerford's, and Stover's voices rose above the uproar:

"Bully, Bob!"

"Good work!"

"Hooray for you!"

Almost immediately Regan received the eighth tap for Bones, and went for his room amidst the thundering cheers of a popular choice.

"Well, here we are, Dink," said Hungerford.

"You're next."

About them the curious spectators pressed, staring up into their faces for any sign of emotion, struggling to reach them, with the dramatic instinct of the crowd. Four more elections were given out by Bones — only three places remained.

"That settles me," said Stover between his teeth. "If they wanted me I'd gone among the first. Joe's going to get last place — bully for him. He's the best fellow in the class."

He folded his arms and smiled with the consciousness of a decision accepted. He saw Hungerford's face, and the agony of suspense to his sensitive nerves.

"Cheer up, Joe, it's last place for you."

Then another shout.

"Bones or Keys?" he asked of those around him.

"Bones."

"Charley Stacey."

"Thirteenth man."

"I was sure of it," he said calmly to himself. Then he glanced up at the window. Her eyes had never left him. He straightened up with a new defiance. "Lord, I'd like to have gotten it, just for Jean. Well, I knocked against too many heads. I don't wonder."

Suddenly Hungerford caught his hand underneath the crowd, pressing it unseen.

"Last man for Bones now, Dink," he said, looking in his eyes. "I hope to God it's you."

"Why, you old chump," said Stover laughing, so all heard him. "Bless your heart, I don't mind. Here's to you."

Above the broken, fitful cheers, suddenly came a last swelling roar.

"Bones."

"Last man."

The crowd, as though divining the election, divided a path towards where the two friends waited, Hungerford staring blankly, Stover, arms still folded, waiting steadily with a smile of acceptation on his lips.

It was Le Baron. He came like a black tornado, rushing over the ground straight toward the tree. Once some one stumbled into his path, and he caught him and flung him aside. Straight to the two he came, never deviating, straight past Dink Stover, and suddenly switching around almost knocked him to the ground with the crash of his blow.

"Go to your room!"

It was a shout of electrifying drama, the voice of his society speaking to the college.

Some one caught Stover. He straightened up, trying to collect his wits, utterly unprepared for the shock. About him pandemonium broke loose. Still dazed, he felt Hungerford leap at him, crying in his ears:

"God bless you, old man. It's great, great — they rose to it. It's the finest ever!"

He began to move mechanically towards his room, seeing nothing, hearing nothing. He started towards the library, and some one swung him around. He heard them cheering, then he saw hundreds of faces, wild-eyed, rushing past him; he stumbled and suddenly his eyes were blurred with tears, and he knew how much he cared, after the long months of rebellion, to be no longer an outsider, but back among his own with the stamp of approval on his record.

The last thing he remembered through his swimming vision was Joe Hungerford, hatless and swinging his arms as though he had gone crazy, leading a cheer, and the cheer was for Bones.

That night, even before he went to the Storys', Stover went out arm in arm with Hungerford, across the quiet campus, so removed from the fray of the afternoon.

"Joe, it breaks me all up," he said at last. "You and I waiting there —"

"Don't speak of it, old fellow," said Hungerford. "Now let me talk. I did want to make it, but, by George, I know now it's better I didn't. I've had everything I wanted in this world; this is the first I couldn't get. It's better for me; I know it already."

"You were clean grit, Joe, cheering for Bones."

"By George, I meant it. It meant something to feel they could rise up and know a man, and you've hit pretty close to them, old boy."

"Yes, I have, but I've believed it."

"It shows the stuff that's here," said Hungerford, "when you once can get to it. Now I take off my hat to them. I only hope you can make your influence felt."

"I'm going to try," said Stover solemnly. "The thing is so big a thing that it ought not to be hampered by bug-a-boo methods."

Brockhurst joined them.

"Well, the smoke's rolled away," said Brockhurst, who likewise had missed out. "It's over — all over. Now we'll settle down to peace and quiet — relax."

"The best time's coming," said Hungerford. "We'll live as we please, and really enjoy life. It's the real time, every one says so."

"Yes," said Brockhurst, rebel to the last, "but why couldn't it come before, why couldn't it be so the whole four years?"

"Well, now, old croaker," said Hungerford with a little heat, "own up the old college comes up to the scratch. We've surrendered the sophomore society system, and the seniors showed to-day that they could recognize honest criticism. That's pretty fine, I say."

"You're pretty fine, Joe," said Brockhurst to their surprise. "Well, it's good enough as it is. It takes an awful lot to stir it, but it's the most sensitive of the American colleges, and it will respond. It wants to do the right thing. Some day it'll see it. I'm a crank, of course." He stopped, and Stover felt in his voice a little note of bitterness. "The trouble with me is just that. I'm impractical; have strange ideas. I'm not satisfied with Yale as a magnificent factory on democratic busi-

ness lines; I dream of something else, something visionary, a great institution not of boys, clean, lovable and honest, but of men of brains, of courage, of leadership, a great center of thought, to stir the country and bring it back to the understanding of what man creates with his imagination, and dares with his will. It's visionary — it will come."

THE END

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